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Bass

THE UK'S N BASS GU ZINE

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Stone Temple Pilots

ROBERT DELEO

"IT TAKES AN IDIOT TO COMPLICATE AND A GENIUS TO SIMPLIFY!"

JAH WOBBLE

ROBERT LEVON BEEN, BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

BILLY SHEEHAN

JACK GIBSON, EXODUS

PAULA GARDINER

WARWICK BASS CAMP

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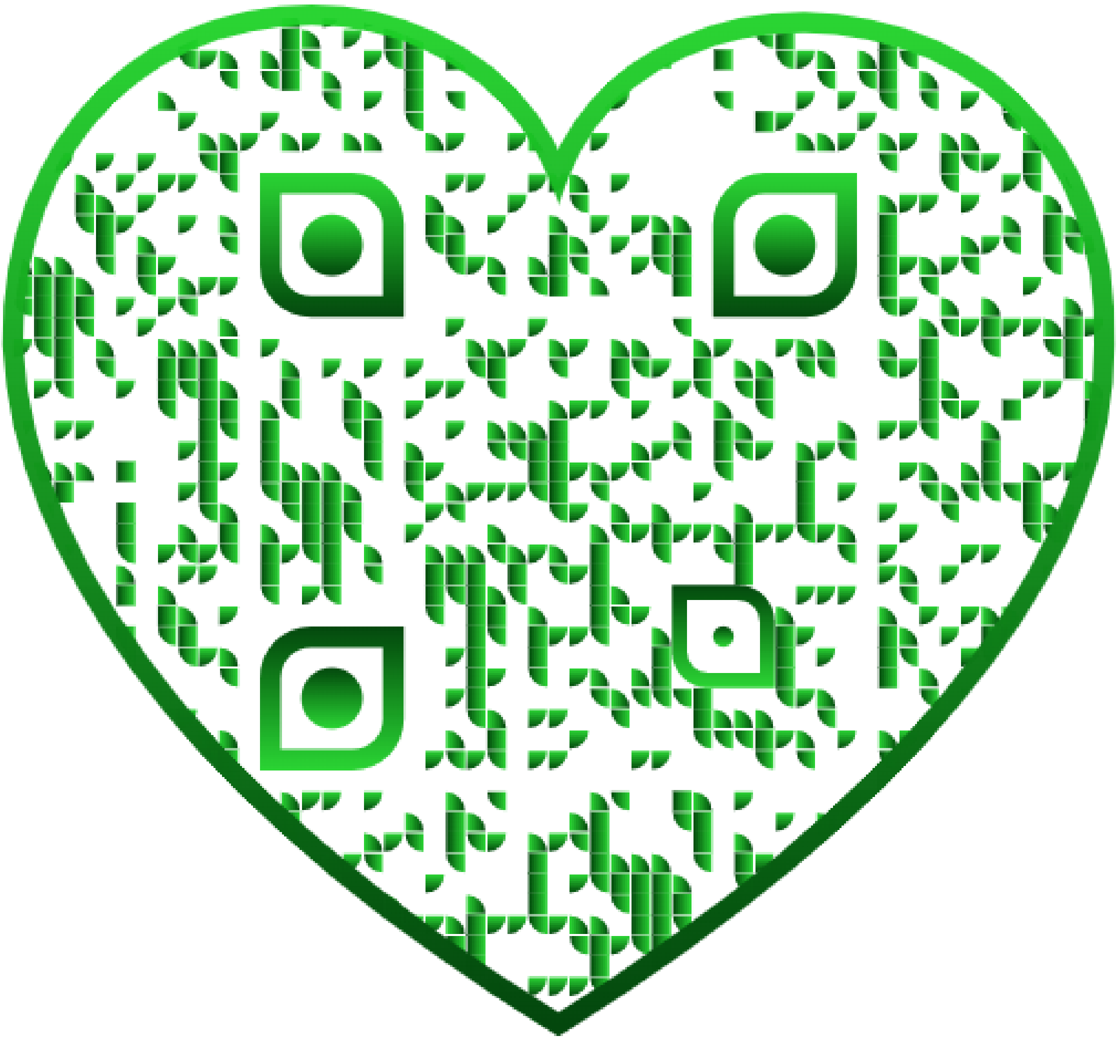

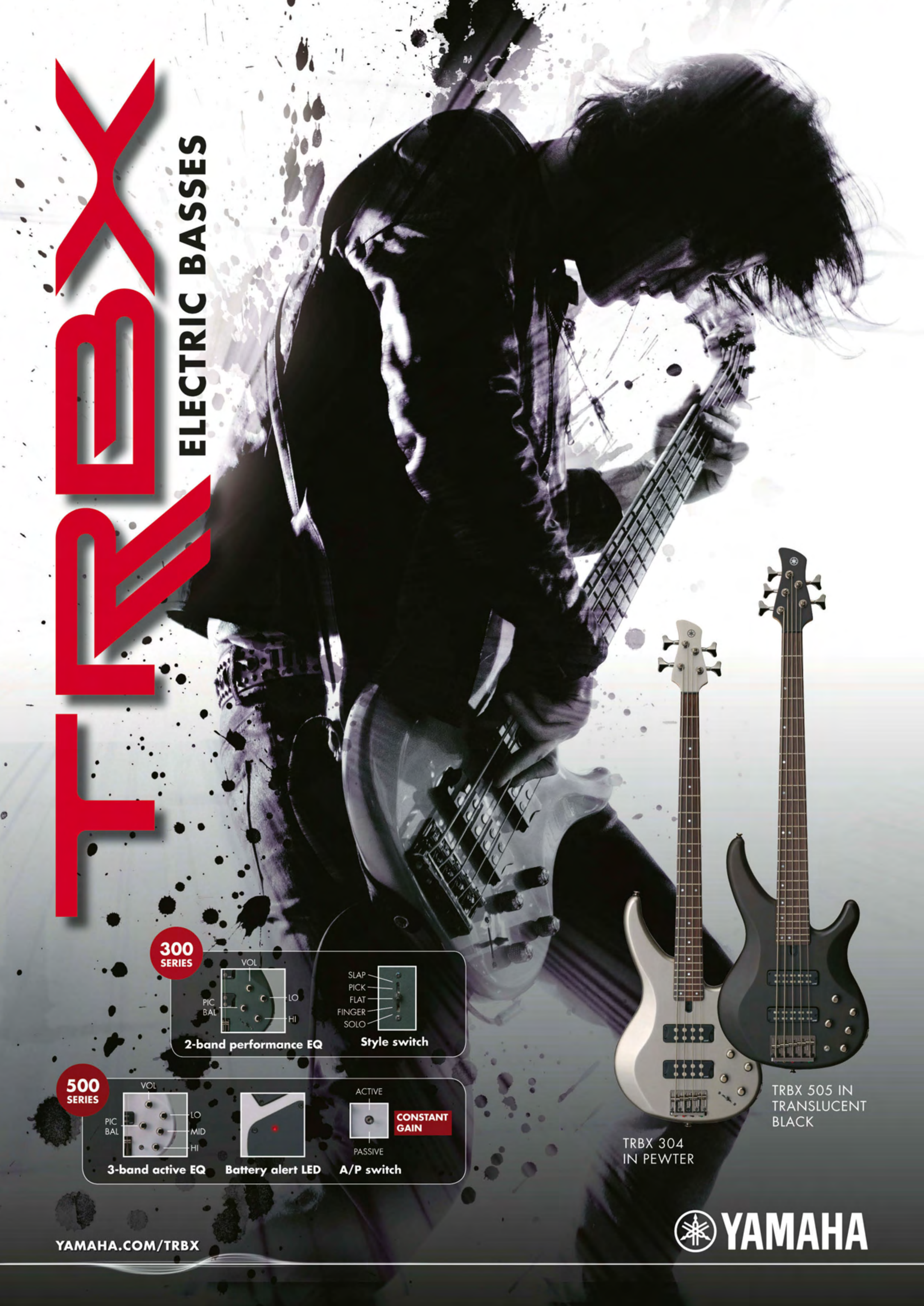

TRBX
ELECTRIC BASSES
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HI
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SLAP
PICK
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FINGER
SOLO
Style switch
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LO
MID
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3-band active EQ
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TRBX 505 IN TRANSLUCENT BLACK
TRBX 304 IN PEWTER
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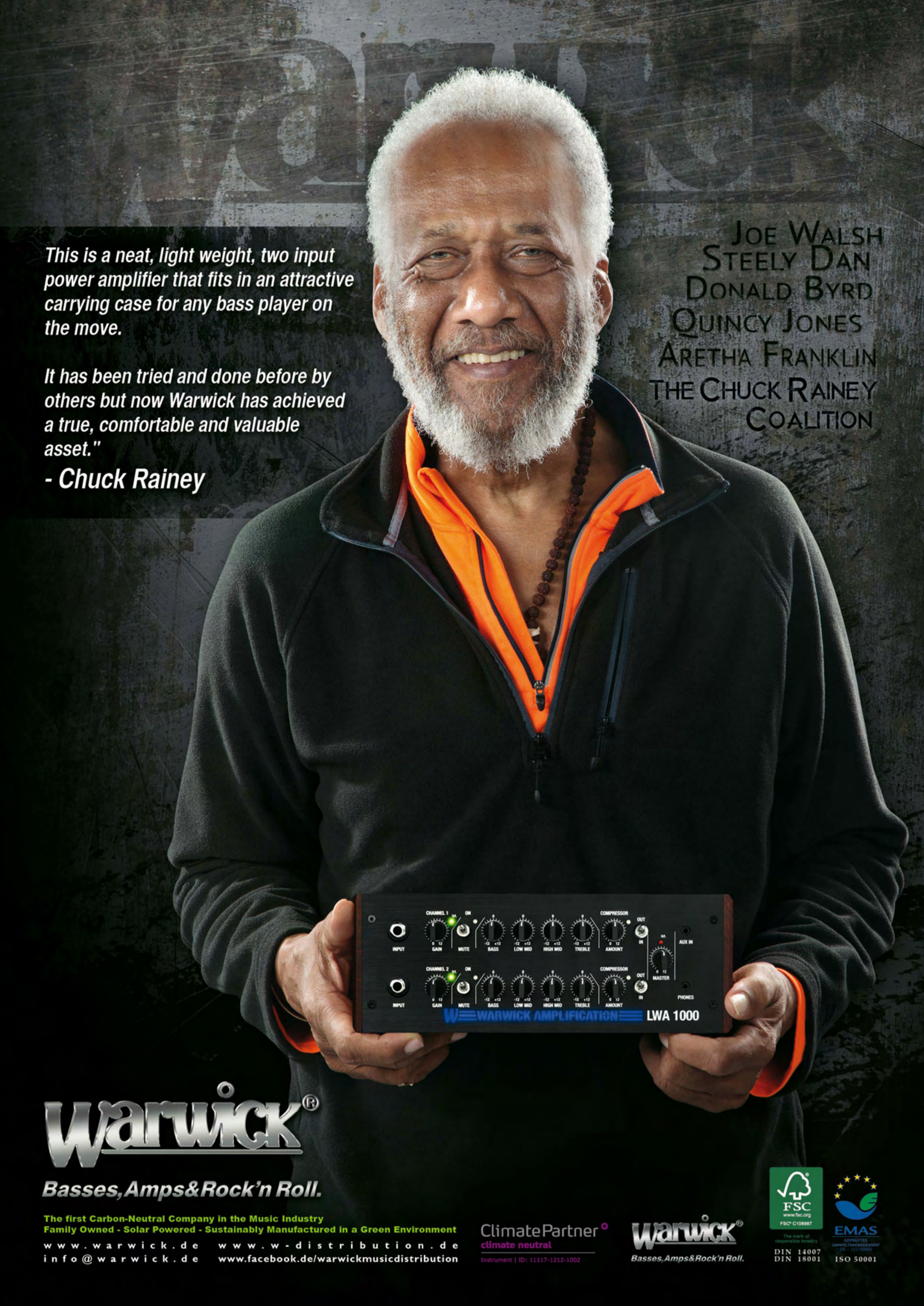

This is a neat, light weight, two input power amplifier that fits in an attractive carrying case for any bass player on the move.
It has been tried and done before by others but now Warwick has achieved a true, comfortable and valuable asset."
- Chuck Rainey
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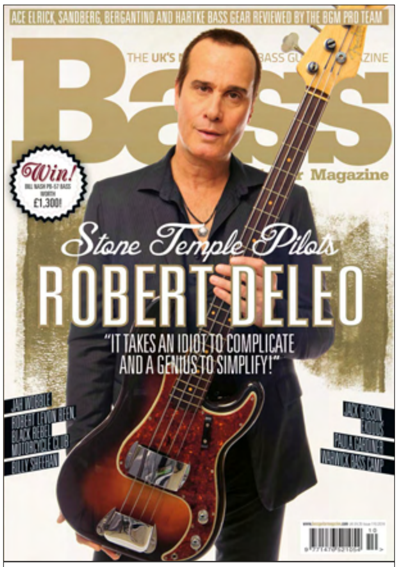

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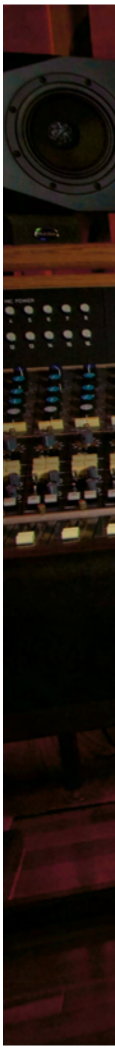
Rock is a cruel mistress, eh? Take the Stone Temple Pilots, one of America's biggest bands of the alternative rock persuasion. Singers have come and gone, albums have been certified platinum, side projects have abounded. Their two decades in business have been anything but tranquil – and yet bassist Robert DeLeo has stayed the course, delivering powerful, James Jamerson-indebted bass-lines for a whole sequence of albums with a bunch of STP-related bands. His interview is something to behold, and has lessons for all of us.

Elsewhere in this frankly dynamite issue of *BGM* we've had sit-down time with the widest range of bass players yet, from thrash metal monster Jack Gibson to jazz maestro Paula Gardiner. Somewhere in between we meet the minds behind the Great British Bass Lounge and Anaconda Basses, talk bass with Billy Sheehan and Jah Wobble and rock out at Warwick's annual Bass Camp. Not a bad month's work, we reckon, and we hope you enjoy it as much as we did. Check out our reviews section, too, in which we delve into eight-string territory for the first time in, well, ages, and our world-beating tuition section, which has expanded in recent months. As well as our beginners, intermediate and advanced columns, we offer you double bass, FX and cover band advice to help you become the bassist you need to be. Don't forget our digital edition, available for iOS and Android platforms as well as online: there's extra video footage for even more value. Finally, have you booked yourself in for the London Bass Guitar Show in March 2015 yet? Visit www.londonbassguitarshow.com or find us on social media without delay. We can hear the floor shaking at Olympia already...

Joel McIver, editor



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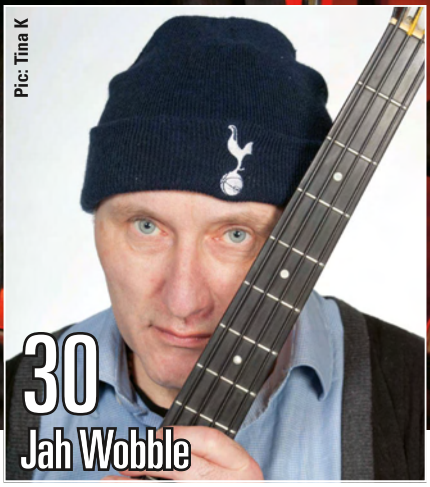

Pic: Tina K

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THE LOW DOWN

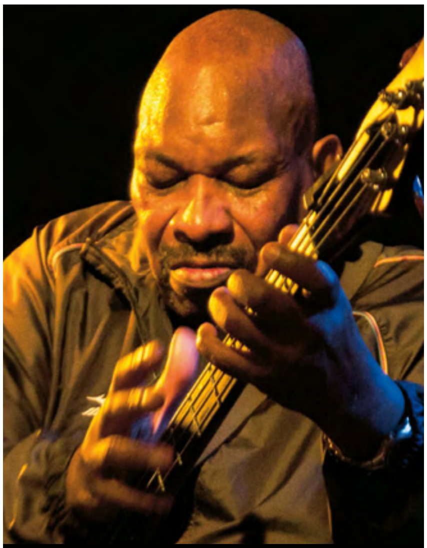
NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BASS WORLD, COLLATED BY BGM'S TEAM OF INTREPID NEWSHOUNDS

SHOW TIME!

We're utterly delighted to announce the first two performances at the London Bass Guitar Show 2015, to be held at London's Olympia on 7-8 March. The first is the one and only **Mark King**, bass legend, icon of British music, a regular in BGM and arguably the world's best known funk bassist. Hailing from the Isle Of Wight and making an international name for himself throughout the 1980s and 90s with the huge-selling band Level 42, Mark quickly established a huge fanbase among bass players thanks to his dazzling slap technique. Mark will be participating in a very special Q&A at the London Bass Guitar Show, where the audience will be able to see him demonstrate the nuts and bolts of the technique which made him a star. Joining Mark will be the ineffably funky **Divinity Roxx**, whose playing with Beyoncé Knowles and polished solo work has made her a star in bass-world. And that's just the start of the bass aceness! Keep an eye out for more announcements at www.londonbassguitarshow.com, where you can also snag tickets, and via BGM's Facebook and Twitter profiles.

FAB GEAR

TKS Engineering, which has designed and hand built high performance speaker cabinets in Sweden for bass since 2008, has chosen Bass Gear in Twyford to be their exclusive UK dealer. These cabs have been creating a stir for their great tone, ultra low weight, and competitive prices. Phil Nixon, managing director of Bass Gear says, "TKS's core lines are super-light ceramic driver cabs. Their baby S112 weighs just 22lbs and retails for around £325. TKS has a nice range of 2- or 3-way cabs with a 6" mid driver, and best of all, customers can custom order in different finishes, grilles, with or without tweeters, and portrait or landscape configurations." All cabinets are designed to work well both with standard and detuned or five-string bass guitars, and *BGM* has secured the first UK review, which will feature in a future issue.



WINDS OF CHANGE

Keep an eye out for Whirlwind Recordings, the label set up by American bassist Michael Janisch to support young British talent as well as American artists. Bassist Max Luthert was one of Michael's students and his debut album *Orbital* is due out on 27 October. Another low-ender, Euan Burton, will be releasing his album *Too Much Love* on 17 November. Euan will also be performing at the Verdi Room at the Royal Albert Hall on 14 November as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival. On 3 November, Headhunters bassist Paul Jackson releases his debut album *Groove Or Die*, and will be performing with his trio at The Hideaway on 14 November. That's a lot of bass for one label, eh?

Info: www.whirlwindrecordings.com

PRIME MOVERS

Californian psychedelic funk trio Primus is back, we tell you, back, with a new album niftily called *Primus & The Chocolate Factory With The Fungi Ensemble* and based on *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory* (the technicolour film from 1971, not Tim Burton's CGI-fest from 2005). "I don't think it was until *Jaws* came along that I was more obsessed with a film," singer and bassist Les Claypool told *Rolling Stone*, "when I started drawing sharks all over my binders and notebooks. Prior to that it was everything Wonka. As we started putting it together, especially with the expanded soundscape of having strings and vibraphone and marimba, it started sounding to me like one of the early Peter Gabriel records meets *Dark Side Of The Moon* meets the Residents. That's what I get out of it. Obviously that's some big-ass horn-tooting to be doing." Keep an eye out for some thumb-testing ideas from Claypool, especially now that his Pachyderm bass is up and running.

Info: www.primusville.com.

EVE-OLUTION, PART 1

In October 2013, *BGM* offered an Eve ProBass as a competition prize. This superb instrument, designed and hand-built by Scottish luthier Douglas Mullen, was scooped up by reader Dick Harding, who writes: "In mid-November 2013, I received an email saying 'Congratulations! You've won the Eve ProBass'. In my delighted reply, I asked Doug to consider substituting a left-hand version for the prize bass, as I can only play left-handed. I appreciated that this was asking for a big favour, but fortunately Doug agreed. He had a full order book until after the London Bass Guitar Show in March 2013, so work on my lefty ProBass would commence after that. The advantage of having my own lefty built (apart from being able to actually play it), included the choice of different options, including active or passive circuitry, chrome, gold, or black hardware, and inlaid fretboard markers as an added extra. Another big plus was that I would receive photographs of work in progress, showing my bass in successive stages of construction. This is something that Douglas always does for commissioned bass guitars, as he likes the personal touch and the customer gets a kick out of seeing their instrument evolve every few weeks. I'll share this with you over the next couple of issues."

Info: www.eveguitars.co.uk

HOW MANY STRINGS...?

Russell Newton of the band Art Of Rebellion has been in touch about his new, 13-string (yes, that's right) bass, telling us: "Jon Letts of Letts Basses built the bass: the strings are G#00 to Ab5, and the gauges are between .254 and .007. The fanned scale goes from 40" to 26", so the frets have quite an extreme fan. It had to be this way: the .254 gauge G#00 needed to be a minimum of 40" to make it even remotely playable. The Ab5 would snap with every tap if the scale stretched past 26", hence the huge scale difference."

He adds: "Rotosound came on board to hand-wind the strings, .254 is the thickest string they had ever wound. The previous thickest string was a .175, which was also ordered by me eight years ago for my 10-string. It's a bolt-on construction, with a solid one-piece body and a seven-laminate neck of wenge and mahogany. The pickup is an in-house build, comprising 13 alnico magnets wound 2,500 times over. The bridge is a combination of eight Hipshot single rail guitar bridges and five Hipshot single rail bass bridges: the tuners are Hipshot Ultra Lights."

Russell concludes: "The action is low, and the bass sounds good. The pickup needs some adjusting to really voice the low end strings, but Letts is aware of this and will be re-building the unit shortly. I wanted to have the bass in hand for a few weeks to see how it really played before they made any amendments to it. The bass was built passive, with a single volume pot – for now. This was the case because a 13-string has never been built, so initial simplicity was the key. Now we know it works, there's plenty of space in the cavity for various preamps and so on." Sounds like a mighty work in progress: keep us posted!

Triumvirate

We select three essential albums from a genre or player.
THIS MONTH: Mike Watt

1 *DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME* BY THE MINUTEMEN

You can't really call an album that clocks in at about 80 minutes but includes more than 40 tracks 'sprawling', but this was by far the Minutemen's weightiest album. That rolling bass-line on 'Anxious Mo-Fo' with its wandering high-end melodies, sets Watt's upfront style for the entire album. Elsewhere you can dig the sputtering funk on 'Viet Nam' and the metallic slap and pop of 'It's Expected, I'm Gone'. And that's just the first side of a four-side album! Enjoy.

2 *THE PUNCHLINE* BY THE MINUTEMEN

With only a couple of tracks cracking the minute mark, the band lived up to their name on their first full length (for want of a better term) album. 'Tension', the album's longest track at 1'18", features a typically incessant groove, with a deliciously grungy tone and some tasty chordal playing. Check out 'Boiling' for its awesome bass breaks and deliriously meandering line, but every track has bombastic bass that became a staple of the Minutemen's output.

3 *3 WAY TIE FOR LAST* BY THE MINUTEMEN

Released shortly before the untimely death of frontman D. Boon, this album features some of the band's strongest material. For bass mastery, 'Political Nightmare' has a fantastic descending motif that encapsulates the song, with upper-register flourishes tossed about nonchalantly. 'Courage' features another muscular line, while 'Have You Ever Seen The Rain' sees Watt in a more restrained form and proves that he didn't always need to be racing across the fretboard.

THEY (STILL) CALL 'EM TC

We were highly impressed with TC Electronic's BH250 head a while back, not least because you could carry it in one hand and save yourself thousands in bills from the osteopath. Now TC has boosted the range to 550 and 800 watts with the BH550 and (duh) BH800, the latter of which we have snagged for review. After a cheeky play-through at TC HQ in Aarhus, Denmark last month, we can confirm it's a mighty mite of a head. Look out for the full verdict in due course.

BAREFACED CHEEK

Barefaced Bass Cabs is heading north (or south, depending on your location) to the Great British Bass Lounge (GBBL) based in Manchester. Drew Dempster of GBBL says: "Given our mission to offer British products that rival the best in the world, it is a logical and exciting step to bring the Barefaced range of bass cabs to Manchester."

Historically, Barefaced has sold their products direct to customers from their workshop in Brighton, and GBBL is the first specialist bass retailer to offer them.

Info: www.greatbritishbasslounge.com

Me And My Bass

In which a *BGM* reader tells us about his or her bass gear...
This month: Simon Kennerly, Rough Diamond

This is me and my beloved Fender 2012 Geddy Lee signature Jazz, with Seymour Duncan STK J2 Hot Stack pickups, and my Trace Elliot AH 1200-12 stack. I love them both. Combined, they're bass heaven. I play indie-rock in my band, Rough Diamond – I've been playing for about 12 years and I reckon I've progressed well in that time. Listening to the late, great John Entwistle – the greatest bassist ever – has helped me along.

Want to be in this column? Email joel@blazepublishing.co.uk.

WIN!

Luthier Bill Nash of the wonderful Bill Nash Guitars has sent us a splendid PB-57 bass to give away. This swoonsome instrument, for which you'd normally have to lay out over £1,300, comes with an ash body, a maple neck, Lollar pickups, stack knob controls, a gold anodised scratchguard and Bill's amazing 'light ageing'. Get your hands on it by answering this simple, and yet not so simple, question...

What was your favourite bass-related event of 2014?

Maybe it's a new bass product. Perhaps it's a great bass-line on a song released this year. Or possibly your favourite bass player gave you an autograph. It's all valid if you ask us. The entry that we like best wins the Nash bass. Visit www.bassguitarmagazine.com/competition to enter, or write to Bass Competition, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. Closing date is 2 December.

WON!

Issue 107: the winner of Reading/Leeds Festival tickets was Tim Anderson. Issue 108: Paul Bromhead nabs the Jaco album signed by Robert Trujillo; Darren Rimes, Tom Leggott, Favio Barrionuevo and Scott Funnell score a pack of Dunlop Super Bright strings; and Andy Winconek, William Chaffin, Nigel Emmerson and Steve Foulkes bag a copy of The Bass Handbook. Thanks to all who entered.

Revolver

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH: 'Rio'

Bassist: *John Taylor*
Album: *Rio by Duran Duran*

Say what you like about '80s pretty boys Duran Duran, they knew how to pen a good tune, and John Taylor sure could play that bass. Nowhere is this in evidence more than on this massive 1982 hit. An intricate and insistent fingerstyle line, delivered with a punchy midrange tone, the bass part contains obvious traces of Jaco and Bernard Edwards. That weaving line under the sax solo is the standout moment.

EVERY MONTH MASTER AXE RESTORER SIMON MCVEIGH WORKS ON BRINGING A KNACKERED OLD RICKENBACKER BACK TO LIFE. THIS MONTH, THE GREAT MAN COMPLETES THE BEAST

Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

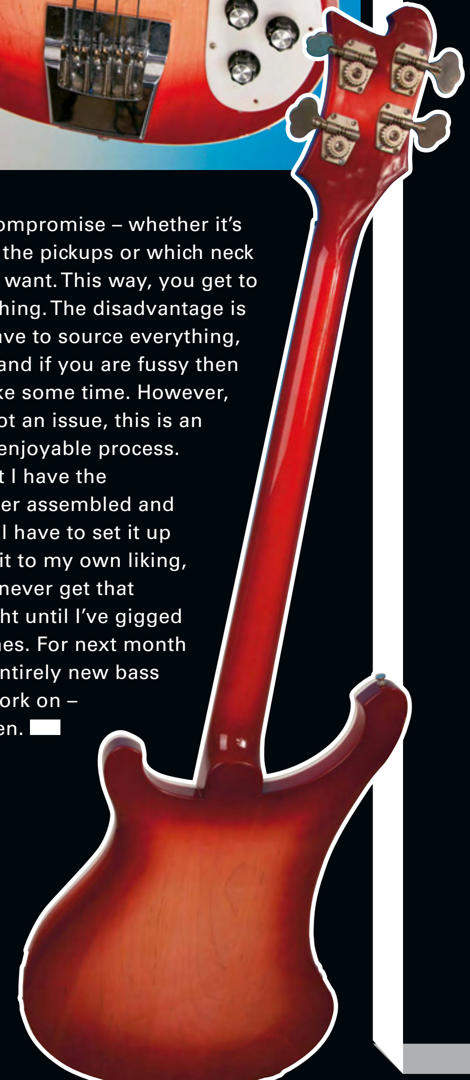
Well, I'm nearly at the end of this build – and as with all these projects, I've learned a lot. Okay, so I've strayed a little outside the guidelines that I set myself in the beginning, but what a bass I have to show for it.

I have installed the new Seymour Duncan pickups and they have made a big difference. You will know from previous projects that I am a fan of these pickups for a number of reasons, and if you feel like you want to upgrade your Rickenbacker, this could be the way to go as these pickups are made to fit the Rick. No cutting of the scratchguard is required – you just pop them in. With just a little solder I had this job done in no time. These pickups give a fuller sound with a modern edge, and they are also pretty quiet compared to the standard Rickenbacker pickups. They also have a lot more output, which gives you more control over your tone.

The tone and volume pots came prewired as an entire loom, which I bought second-hand. You will find that most of the dealers who specialise in selling guitar parts will be sensible about how they dismantle their guitars. Ideally they will keep certain parts or groups of parts together, as this entire wiring loom was: it would make no sense for them to break it down into individual pots to sell off one by one. With just a couple of spots of solder I had the wiring loom installed. If you are in doubt of how the wiring should be, then all the wiring diagrams are available on the internet.

If you can't find exactly what you're looking for in the shops, or if your budget only allows you to spend a little bit each month, then this type of build could be for you – as you can take as long as you want and stop and start as your budget allows. One of the main advantages to building a bass this way is that you get your spec exactly how you want it, even down to the colour. If you buy a second-hand bass of any description, in my experience, there is always a compromise – whether it's the colour, the pickups or which neck profile you want. This way, you get to pick everything. The disadvantage is that you have to source everything, of course, and if you are fussy then this can take some time. However, if time is not an issue, this is an extremely enjoyable process.

Now that I have the Rickenbacker assembled and working, I'll have to set it up and tweak it to my own liking, although I never get that entirely right until I've gigged it a few times. For next month I have an entirely new bass guitar to work on – see you then. ■



Total spend: £790 (not bad for a bass of this quality)
Contact: simonmcveigh@eircom.net

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4 String Basses

Breedlove

11818 - Breedlove BJ350/SMe4 Electro Acoustic
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
13305 - Cort B4 OPM (Open Pore Mahogany) Used
12807 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rithimic, Used

Fender

13365 - Fender American Dlx Dimension IV Cayenne
4219 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz, Sunburst
9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
9231 - Fender Am Standard Jazz Bass, Sunburst
13511 - Fender Am. Vint. 64 Jazz, Daphne Blue
13502 - Fender FSR Aerodyne Jazz Candy Apple Red
13307 - Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass, White
12288 - Fender Mike Dirnt Road Worn Precision SB
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
13253 - Fender Road Worn 50's P Bass, Sunburst
12426 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass Brown Sunburst
12717 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Midnight Wine
13252 - Fender Starcaster J Bass, Black
13323 - Fender Sting Precision Bass, Sunburst
12895 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
12894 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
10997 - G&L Tribute SB2 4-String, Metallic Black

Gibson

9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
12722 - Gibson Les Paul Bass, Heritage Cherry SunB.
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
12218 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass Guitar in Blue
13328 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Black
12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst

LEVIN

6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst
8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black

MUSICMAN

4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8250 - Musicman Sterling 4 String Bass, Blue
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
10962 - Overwater Inspiration 4, Blue Burst
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
7890 - Rickenbacker 4003, Jetglo
12405 - Spector Bass Performer 4 String, Black
11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
13337 - Spector Coda Pro 4 Black Cherry Stain
4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
13322 - Tanglewood Rebel Bass, Lefty, Used, Blk
13051 - Tobias Toby Deluxe IV Bass, Trans Amber

WestCoast

6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

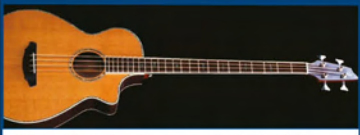
YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
6953 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
13390 - Yamaha TRBX174 4 String Bass, Black
13138 - Yamaha TRBX304 4 String Bass In White
13300 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass, Black

5 String Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
11014 - Fender Jazz Bass 5 String
13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String In Walnut
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
12198 - MusicMan Stingray 5 Honeyburst
13306 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
12561 - Peavey Millenium BXP 5-String Bass
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
13204 - Sandberg California TM, Black, Used
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
11195 - Spector Bass Performer 5 Black SP5BK
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
13214 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Black
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
8275 - Yamaha BB425X,Sunburst, Used
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
8023 - Yamaha TRB1005J 5 String, Caramel Brown
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
13389 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass, Candy Apple Red
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses



8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
13297 - Freshman FA350B Acoustic Bass, Used
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
12351 - Ortega D Walker White Short Scale
10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
13472 - Tanglewood TW155A Acoustic Bass
13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar
12292 - Westfield PJB380 Acoustic Bass Natural

Electric Upright Basses

4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
13371 - Squier Vintage Modified Fretless Bass

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)

Ashdown Engineering

4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
11192 - Ashdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3 Bass
6459 - Ashdown ABM C210T-500 EVO 3 (2x10)
12259 - Ashdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
12258 - Ashdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10 Bass
11193 - Ashdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
13135 - Ashdown DH15 C110 Drophead Bass
13134 - Ashdown DH30 C115 Drophead Valve
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100 Bass
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Bass
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
8750 - Ashdown Perfect Ten 40 Bass Combo
13202 - Ashdown RM-C115-420 420w Bass
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Bass
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
13122 - Ashdown Vintage Twelve 75 Bass Combo
8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
13375 - Eden EC28 Bass Amp Combo
12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo

Hartke®

10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151PJ Berlin(300W,1x15)
13279 - MarkBass Markacoustic AC601 Combo
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (1x15W)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
13516 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Bass Amp
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Bass Amp

Peavey

8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Bass Amp
11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo
13372 - RM-C210T-420 420w 2 x 10 Rootmaster
6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X(120w,1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)
4599 - TC Electronic BG500 115 500W, 1x15

Bass Heads

13136 - Ashdown ABM400LITE Lightweight Head
4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
13131 - Ashdown CTM100 100W Valve Bass Head
11229 - Ashdown CTM15 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
13192 - Ashdown Five 15 BBH 220w Big Boy Head
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
10938 - Ashdown MIBASS 2.0 640w Small Bass Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
13203 - Ashdown RM Mag 420 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
13200 - Eden E300 Bass Amplifier
13414 - Eden WT800 Bass Amp Head
13198 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
9349 - Hartke HA2500 Bass Head
9027 - Hartke Kilo 1000 Bass Head
12382 - Hartke LH1000 Bass Head
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Bass Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Momark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Bass Head
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
5242 - Orange TB1000 1000W Terror
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets

8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
13377 - Eden D112XST Bass Cab
13376 - Eden D410XST Bass Cab
13197 - Eden EX112 Compact Bass Cab
13374 - Eden EX115 Bass Cab
13195 - Eden EX210 Bass Cab
13199 - Eden EX410 Bass Cabinet
13201 - Eden EX410SC Bass Cabinet
9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrive 410 Bass Cab
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
5239 - Orange SP212 Smart Power Isobaric (2x12)
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

THE BISCUIT'$ BA$$ BU$INE$$

THIS MONTH, BASS TUTOR AND SESSION REGULAR GARY 'BISCUIT' BENNETT DISCUSSES WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME ESTABLISHED AS A PROFESSIONAL BASS TEACHER

It's good to be back with you all once again. In this month's column I would like to continue where I left off on the subject of teaching the bass guitar. Even if you haven't attained any formal music qualifications, don't worry: it is not compulsory to have done so in order to teach a musical instrument. However, and this cannot be overstated, it is crucial that you have an in-depth knowledge of your instrument and music theory, together with the ability to pass on that information in the most effective way, if you are to become a successful teacher.

There are various ways of doing this, but I would strongly urge the use of bass guitar and music literature for your teaching work. *Absolute Beginners Bass Guitar* by Phil Mulford is a great help for students new to the instrument, and will certainly get your students underway with your guidance. I would also highly recommend *The AB Guide To Music Theory, Parts 1 And 2* by Eric Taylor, which will supply you with most of what is needed to be known about music theory and notation. I'll return to the subject of further books to use and syllabus planning in the next issue.

A more immediate issue for any beginner is that of posture. Adopting bad habits will create problems for any bassist further down the line, so make sure that you advise your student on both sitting and standing positions right from the start, as this could otherwise result in the development of problems such as back, shoulder and neck strain. Look at warm-up exercises too, in order to avoid tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. Emphasise the value of warming up before embarking on any strenuous playing.

Always remember to make sure that both you and your student keep a record of the progress made. Ensure that they complete their homework in time for the next lesson, as well as maintaining their actual playing time: 20 minutes per day is a reasonable amount to suggest. All this is paramount to future development on the bass. Accept no excuses!

Gary 'Biscuit' Bennett is a freelance bass guitarist and tutor, covering Essex, London and the south-east, with many years of experience in the music industry under his belt. His CV includes hundreds of live performances and many domestic and international recording sessions. Awarded the title of Hartke's 'Best Unsigned Bass Player Worldwide 2008', Biscuit is currently an endorsing artist for Hartke, D'Addario, Planet Waves, Boss, Essential Sound Products and Hypnotic. Contact: @biscuitisation

BASSICALLY SPEAKING

BASSISTS REVEAL THE TRICKS OF THEIR TRADE FASTER THAN A SNAPPING D STRING

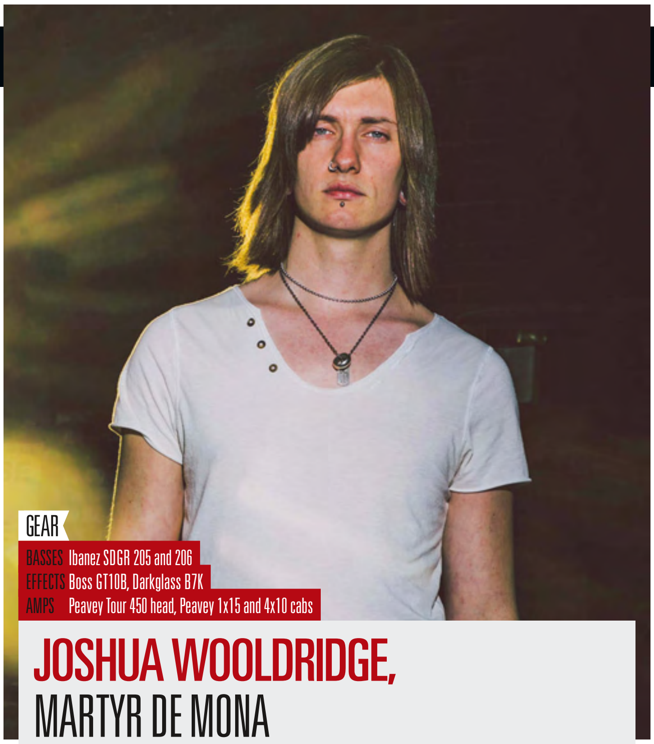
GEAR
BASSES Caparison Dellinger
EFFECTS Tech 21 Sansamp, Boss TU2 Tuner
AMPS Mesa Boogie M6 Carbine Head, 6x10 Power House Mesa cabs

JEFF WILLIAMS, ONSLAUGHT

I would describe my bass style as tactless, lacking subtlety and with a slightly spiteful aftertaste. I do not play five- or six-string basses because they have too many strings. I slap because from time to time I work in a music shop and kids like to hear you do that sort of stuff. The secret of playing bass well is to enjoy what you're doing and forget anyone else who tells you otherwise. Oh, and don't take it too seriously: it's just a bass. My first bass was a Hondo 2 Professional; I've never trusted anything with Professional written on it since. Professional cookware? I doubt that very much. My favourite bass ever? I love my Caparisons. I had a custom one made for me a little while ago and it's the best thing I've ever played. I've also had a few old Fenders and 1980s Ibanez basses too. The 1974 Fender Jazz I had was almost as bad as my Hondo to play. Old classics ain't always good, folks. My bass hero is my mate Gary, we grew up together in Abertillery and he got stupidly good stupidly quickly. He had a bass and I had an electric guitar for Christmas one year and within a month, while I was still screwing up the chords to 'Freebird' he was playing along to Level 42 and making coffee at the same time. I was just playing my guitar using two-string power chords, so I thought well, if I'm only using two strings I might as well play bass in a metal band. If there's one thing I've learned over the years, it's that sometimes it's more important for your fingers to be pointing rather than playing. If you've forgotten a bass part, don't stand there looking like a prick fumbling all over the neck of your beloved bass searching for that oh-so-elusive note. No, just point with confidence, pull a rock'n'roll face and if by chance there's a monitor available, put your foot on it. Engage the audience and carry on pointing like a mental auctioneer seeking out the highest bidder in the room, until the easy part comes around again, then seamlessly bend back into the song until the next tricky moment rears its ugly head.

"I WAS JUST PLAYING MY GUITAR USING TWO-STRING POWER CHORDS, SO I THOUGHT WELL, IF I'M ONLY USING TWO STRINGS I MIGHT AS WELL PLAY BASS IN A METAL BAND"

www.onslaughtuk.com



GEAR
BASSES Ibanez SDGR 205 and 206
EFFECTS Boss GT10B, Darkglass B7K
AMPS Peavey Tour 450 head, Peavey 1x15 and 4x10 cabs

JOSHUA WOOLDRIDGE, MARTYR DE MONA

I like my lines to differ from the guitar riffs to complement each instrument, without deviating too much. I play five-string bass, because it adds depth to my lines. I don't like to integrate the lower notes too much, but it really adds to the music to give it something more where I think it needs it. I love the sound of slap bass, but I only use it on rare occasions. Our music isn't really for slap bass but occasionally it is useful. My first bass was a BC Rich Warlock: it got battered to hell and had definitely seen better days. My favourite bass ever is my Ibanez SDGR 205 – I love the feel of the thinner neck and smaller string spacing. The 205 gives me the tone I love and complements my rig. The greatest bass player that ever lived is Adam 'Nolly' Getgood of Periphery: he is a bass wizard with an incredible tone and unbelievable talent.

http://martyrdemona.com

BEN CURTIS, THE MOONS

With the Moons the bass parts are prominent and integral to the sound of the band and the songs. I think that's because Andy, who writes our songs, was the bass player in his previous band so he's happy for the bass to be more of a feature in the song. I like working with different styles of songwriters, as it will only help make me a better bass player and musician.

I do not play five- or six-string bass. I've never really needed to be that low in a song to make use of the low B string. I've never really thought about getting one or needing one, as I wouldn't ever need one for the style of music I play. If I were to teach someone how to play bass, I would tell them to make sure to lock in with the drummer's groove and provide a solid backbone for the feel of the song. My first bass was an Epiphone Thunderbird because that's all I could afford at the time. I quickly sold it and got a Fender Jazz and haven't looked back since. The first bass players that turned me on to how important the bass is in a band and in songs were Paul McCartney, Pete Quaife and Bill Wyman because the Beatles, Kinks and Stones are what I listened to when I was younger and started playing along to. I also love Mani's bass playing in the Stone Roses, John Paul Jones's lines in Led Zeppelin and I also love hearing double bass, so Danny Thompson and Paul Chambers.

www.themoons.co.uk

FERNANDA LIRA, NERVOSA

I always try to make my instrument listenable and stand out among the other instruments, something that's uncommon in extreme metal. I play a five-string bass because the brand I play, a Dutch one called Aristides, only produced basses this way at the time I got sponsored. I also think it fits perfectly to the kind of music we make. I can explore lower tones and notes that can perfectly match the aggressiveness that thrash metal demands.

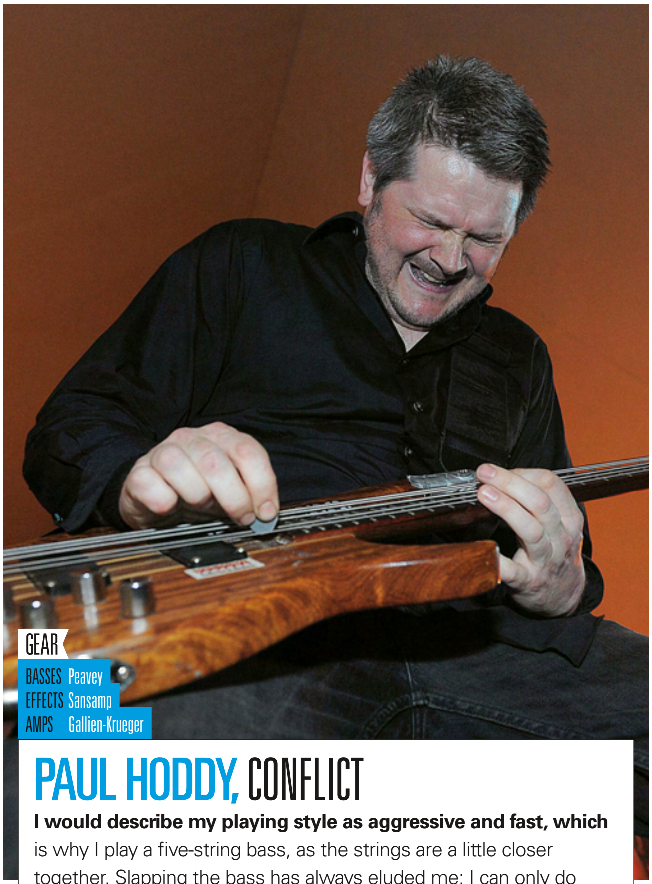
For my band's next album, I really plan to expand my horizons in terms of writing music and exploring new techniques and no doubt slapping will be on my list. The secret of playing bass well is feeling the music. Actually I guess this is the key to every instrument you play. I'm a person who's really more interested in guys who feel what they are playing, and not those ones who can play a thousand notes but without dropping any emotion to their music. Just like the essence of the blues music, I think the passion you put into your music can mean more than a hundred technical notes. The greatest bass player that ever lived is Steve Harris. Firstly, because he did back then what no other metal bassist could do. Also, he has the most important features I appreciate in a bass player: it's not just about technique but also feeling. He's a creative guy using simple techniques – I admire that a lot.

www.nervosaofficial.com

JOE TREVISANO, AUTOPSY

I do not play a five- or six-string bass because I do not own one. There are some great-sounding basses out there but I still play my four-string. I do not slap because it does not fit the style of music I play. Autopsy is death metal, I would probably get slapped if I tried it! I hold down the low end as tight as I can. Versatility in style is great. I develop better technique when I get out of the style I get used to and return to it with a different attack. My favourite bass ever to date is my 4003 series Rickenbacker. It is such a well-made bass and just screams rock'n'roll. It was used to record with all the Autopsy releases I perform, and I really love the tone. The greatest bass player that ever lived was Jaco Pastorius. I can appreciate the connection he made with his playing style and impulsiveness. He walked on the edge for what was considered acceptable in his time.

www.autopsydeathmetal.com



PAUL HODDY, CONFLICT

I would describe my playing style as aggressive and fast, which is why I play a five-string bass, as the strings are a little closer together. Slapping the bass has always eluded me: I can only do the basics, and I don't think that I would be bothered to learn as I'd get too frustrated if I couldn't master it right away. There's no real secret as such to playing well but I think that you need a good understanding with the drummer, and for me, the rhythm of the strumming hand makes a difference, it's not all about up and down all the time. The first bass I had was a medium-scale sunburst thingy from a second hand shop. I don't know the make but the first real one was a Westone. I used to love my old, white Aria Pro 2, it had a small body and slim neck – smooth to play and great sounds. I would love a Rickenbacker 4003 but you can't throw that around. I'd go with Jaco Pastorius as the greatest bassist ever – an incredible talent. He seemed to figure the bass out and certainly brought it further than anyone else at the time, especially with harmonics.
www.facebook.com and search for Conflict

MARTYN MILLARD, ORANGE GOBLIN

No thrills, no pick! It's all about the fingers. I certainly do not play five- or six-string basses. I have enough trouble with four. I do not slap. There really isn't much of a call for it in what Orange Goblin does: Goblin is all about riffs and having fun. I don't think many of our fans would be that interested in me slapping away mid-song. The secret of playing bass well is the same as most things: dedication, hard work and enjoyment. My first bass? Boy, it's a long time ago but I think it was a white Yamaha Chevelle. I might be wrong about that. I think Joe – Orange Goblin's guitarist – still has it somewhere. My favourite bass ever is my 1973 Fender Precision. It has a rare gold scratchplate, which attracts attention – but I love it. It's starting to need more and more maintenance on it as it gets older, but it just has the most natural deep sound I've ever heard on a bass guitar. I love it.
www.orange-goblin.com

DAN ABELA, VOICES

I try to always play something which complements the drums as well as guitars: I think too many players these days rest on their laurels and just follow the rhythm guitar line. Sometimes this is appropriate but having a drummer like ours, David Gray, in the band means I get to play some interesting rhythms. I've been playing five-string for the last few years now and wouldn't go back to four strings. I really like having the thicker neck as well as the extended range. Voices play in B standard so it means there's no messing around with a five-string: I haven't got to compromise with intonation and string tension, which is an important thing in my opinion. Steve DiGiorgio is a big influence for me as well as Death as a band, and also Alex Webster – you can't beat some old school Cannibal Corpse. The greatest bass player that ever lived? I think Tony Levin is an undeniable genius – a totally different style to what I mainly listen to but what he plays is always musical as well as being technical. I think Jean-Michel Labadie from Gojira always has an amazing tone and is the same vibe I go for.
www.facebook.com/voiceslondon

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GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision, Rickenbacker 4003
EFFECTS None
AMPS Orange MK3 AD200, Orange 4x10 & 1x15

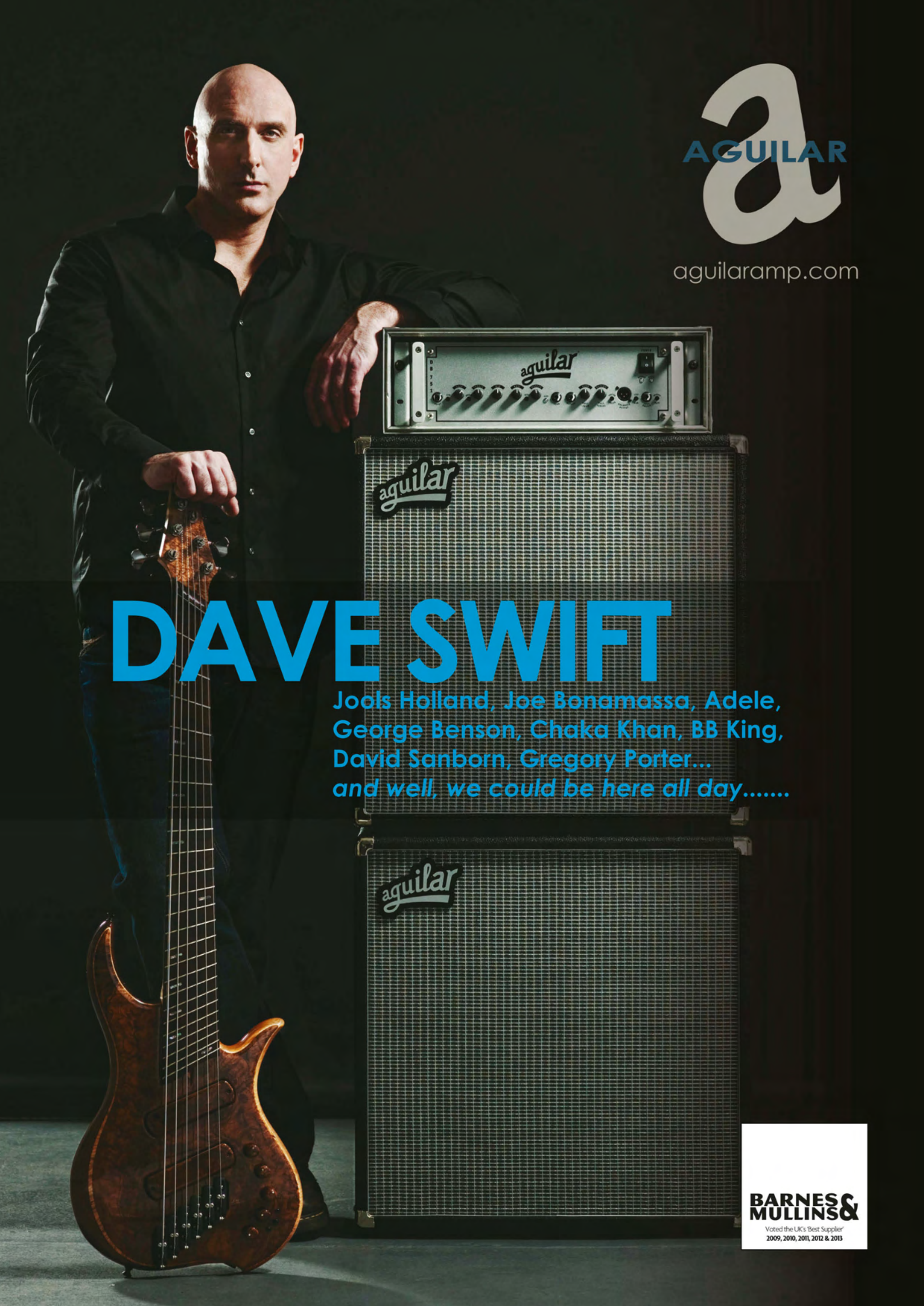
AIDAN MCGARRIGLE, MASSIVE

My playing style is influenced a lot by the bassists in some of my favourite bands: guys like Steve Harris and Cliff Burton had a big part in that. There are a number of others, but largely it's bassists who I heard during my formative years. I think it's fair to say you can hear those fellas when I'm playing. At the same time, I've always tried to develop my own chops and my own style of playing. The bottom line has always been to have fun with it. I slap on the odd occasion, but not too much and never live, unless I'm mucking around on a big ending. It's cool to jam on some tracks by the Red Hot Chili Peppers when we're messing around. Aside from that, I'm a traditional player. I make an effort to jam on the odd jazz or classical piece to help with different methods, different tricks and generally step outside of my comfort zone with a view to improving my playing. My first bass was a rad Samick starter pack that my parents bought me when I turned 13. The shape was similar to a P-Bass. It sounded vaguely like a garbage disposal unit. The best bass I've ever played was a Jetglow Rickenbacker 4003, which looked great, sounded great and was a pleasure to play. Unfortunately, we carved it up after a New Year's Eve gig and someone decided to steal a heap of our gear from the venue lockup when we were doing so. If anyone ever hits the stage playing that baby in years to come, I hope for their sake that they can run fast.
www.massiveoz.com

GEAR
BASSES Fender Modern Player Jazz
EFFECTS None
AMPS Whatever amp is going

HANNAH LODGE, ELEVANT

I would describe my style of playing as fluid, a bit psychedelic and rock steady. The job is providing a killer platform for the band to work off. The top end is not where the thunder is hidden. That's all in the thick strings. The ERB does have its place, but if you get too high up it intrudes on the guitar's territory. If everyone is locked in tight the whole band goes up a level in their own playing. My bass heroes are Simon Gallup of the Cure, Jaco Pastorius, D'Arcy Wretzky of the Smashing Pumpkins, Kim Deal of the Pixies and Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth. The greatest bass player that ever lived? Though it doesn't technically count, Bach probably wrote some of the greatest bass-lines ever, but if I have to pick I'll go with Jaco. The way he used harmonics was fantastic.
http://elevantband.com


AGUILAR
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DAVE SWIFT
Jools Holland, Joe Bonamassa, Adele,
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and well, we could be here all day.......
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GEAR
BASSES Rickenbacker 4003, Fender Jazz V
EFFECTS MXR Custom Shop GT-OD Overdrive
AMPS Ampeg SVT 3 Pro head, SWR Workingman 2x10 cabs, SWR WorkingPro 1x15 cab

BECKY BALDWIN
CONTROL THE STORM, TRIAXIS, IDESTROY

I am predominantly a rock fingerstyle player but in the last year I have performed with thrash metal, folk, punk, urban, blues, funk and pop bands and artists. I have recently started playing double bass so I'm looking forward to some rockabilly in the future. I think all the styles feed in to each other. Just throw yourself in and be prepared to learn on the job. There is only so much that your practice can do, and by getting out there and doing what you want, you will realise how you can improve your personal practice. Don't wait to be able to achieve some kind of elusive bass godliness to get out there, it won't come out of bedroom playing. Your instrument can unleash frequencies usually reserved for Mother Nature in the form of thunderstorms, earthquakes and stampeding elephants. In doing so you tap in to your audience's most primal conciousness. In other words, you have the power to make them go crazy. Go you!

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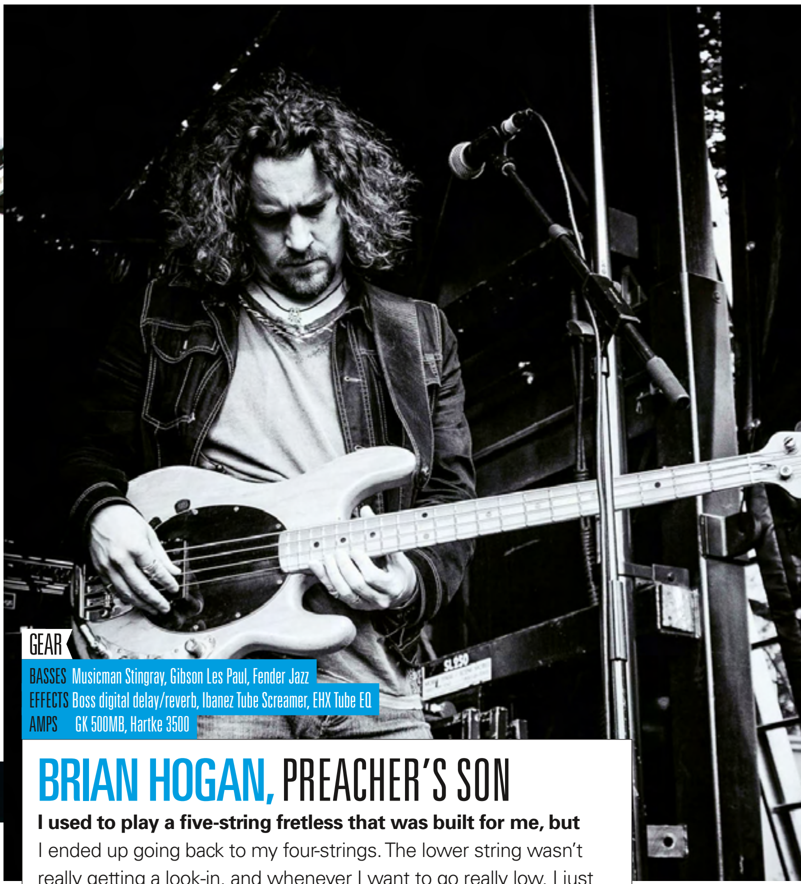


GEAR
BASSES Musicman Stingray, Gibson Les Paul, Fender Jazz
EFFECTS Boss digital delay/reverb, Ibanez Tube Screamer, EHX Tube EQ
AMPS GK 500MB, Hartke 3500

BRIAN HOGAN, PREACHER'S SON

I used to play a five-string fretless that was built for me, but I ended up going back to my four-strings. The lower string wasn't really getting a look-in, and whenever I want to go really low, I just tune down. I've nothing against five- or six-string basses, though – I just haven't felt the need. I used to slap a lot when I was younger, as it was a flashy technique, but it's like a guitarist playing hammer-ons all the time – where does it fit? I find slapping to be limited and difficult tonally, as it tends to fill the entire low/mid spectrum, which can make for a load of mud. When treated as a percussive tool with other drums, there are many possibilities for it, but I don't often find a use for it. Apply yourself as a musician first, think what the bass would add, and then be a bass player. Paul McCartney used to put his bass parts down after the initial recording so as to work out a part that worked best for the track but still had great melodic quality. My 1978 Musicman Stingray is the nicest bass I've ever played. Loads of bass, loads of top when needed and the neck is like the nicest P-Bass in the world. I can't believe I haven't had one before: this bass is meant to be in my hands, no doubt.

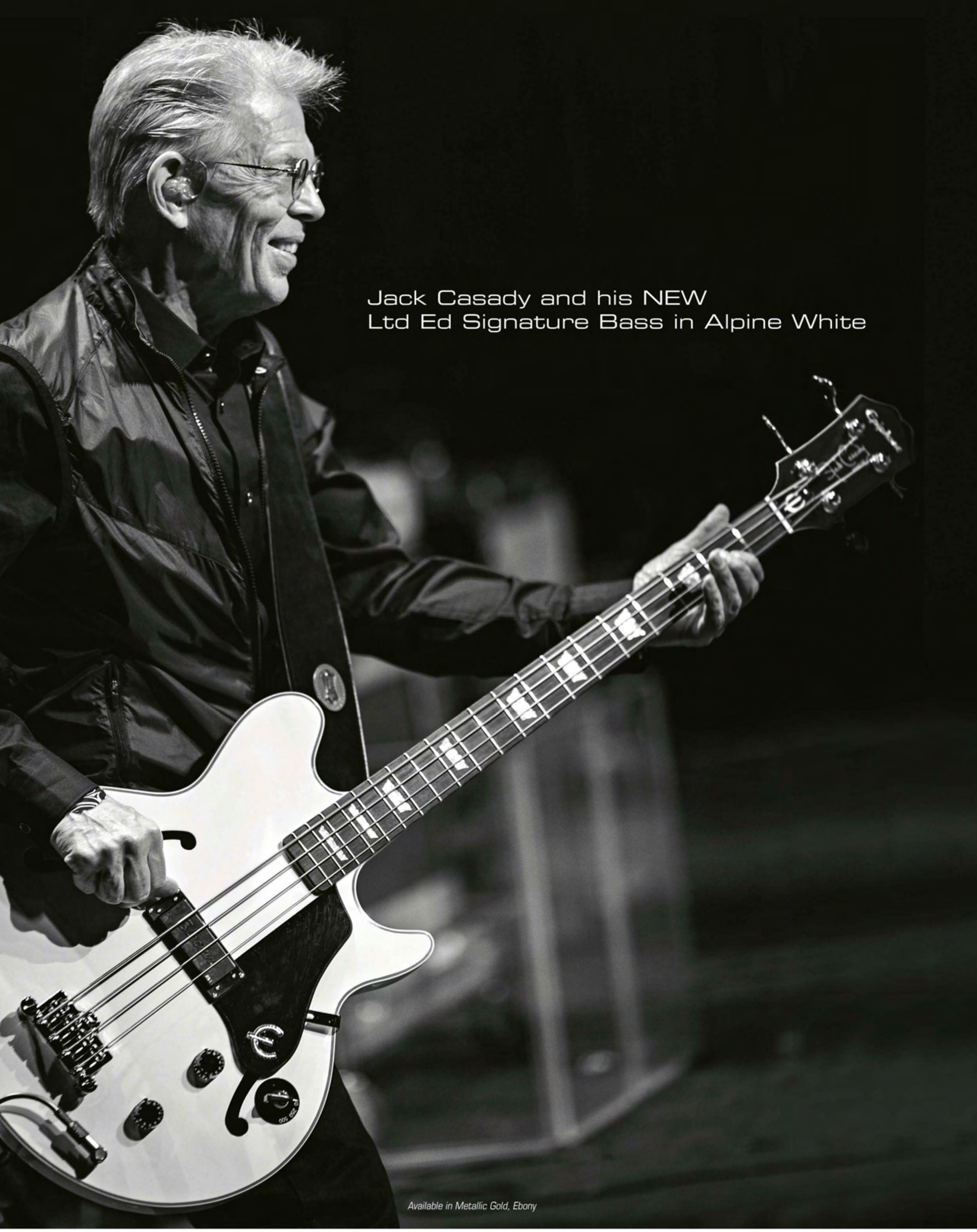
www.preachersson.com

AARON RIESEBERG, YOB

I would describe my bass style as big and lumbering with an emphasis on the pocket. Sometimes I'm just plodding to carry the tension and then I colour a lot on changes. I used to be real aggressive with all my bass-lines, always on the attack with runs and very busy. I started to break into a completely different style as time went on and I started paying more attention to how that was serving the song or the other dudes I was playing with. I still dig that busy, ripping bass riffing. I would love to do something over the top one of these days. One of the secrets to playing and sounding good is getting your bass intonated. Some guys have crazy low or obscure tunings and don't get their guitar set up. I have found this out the hard way a few times while in the studio. Spare yourself: get that neck true! If I could dial up any bass tone on any album I would get the sound Roy Wood captured on the Move's last album, *Message From The Country*. It dumbfounds me every time I hear that record. I get that so much of someone's tone comes from the hands and how you play, plus the amps and cabs, but Roy sounds like a Godzilla-like Chris Squire tone that drools with all these harmonics dripping off it.

www.yobislove.com

GEAR
BASSES Gibson Thunderbird, Fender Precision, Rickenbacker
EFFECTS BJFE Blueberry Bass OD, D*A*M* Meathead fuzz, Prescription Electronics Depth Charge, Iron Either Nimbus reverb, Analogman chorus, Ernie Ball volume pedal
AMPS Gallien-Krueger heads, Ampeg cabs



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BASSES *to watch*

A NEW SERIES IN WHICH WE SPOTLIGHT UP-AND-COMING BASS GEAR. THIS MONTH: ANACONDA BASSES. WORDS: MIKE BROOKS

In his north London workshop, Andrew Taylor-Cummings of Anaconda Basses is applying the finishing touches to several instruments, each destined for various corners of the globe. Following a successful appearance at the London Bass Guitar Show in March 2014, business is on the up. As Andrew explains: "I have instruments on their way to working freelance bassists in Germany and the US, and Bass Club Paris is now distributing the Anaconda brand in France. I will eventually find a distributor in the US, but at the moment my focus is on establishing the brand in the UK and Europe. A lot of sales traffic is coming through the website and Facebook page at the moment, which is positive. The LBGS was a great advertisement for the instruments and what I have to offer as a luthier, but with a series of ACM presentations, student demos and bass clinics coming up in the autumn, potential customers will now be able to see, hear and play our instruments."

As a one-man operation working from home, it's obviously challenging balancing the instrument building and development with the marketing and advertising side of the business – but it's a challenge Andrew readily accepts. As he tells us: "My aim is to make the customer's life as easy as possible when considering one of my basses. I want them to be able to see all of the options available without any obstructions: the ordering process has to be as 'friendly' as possible. It's a fine line between getting the business and advertising side right just as much as building the best instruments you can."

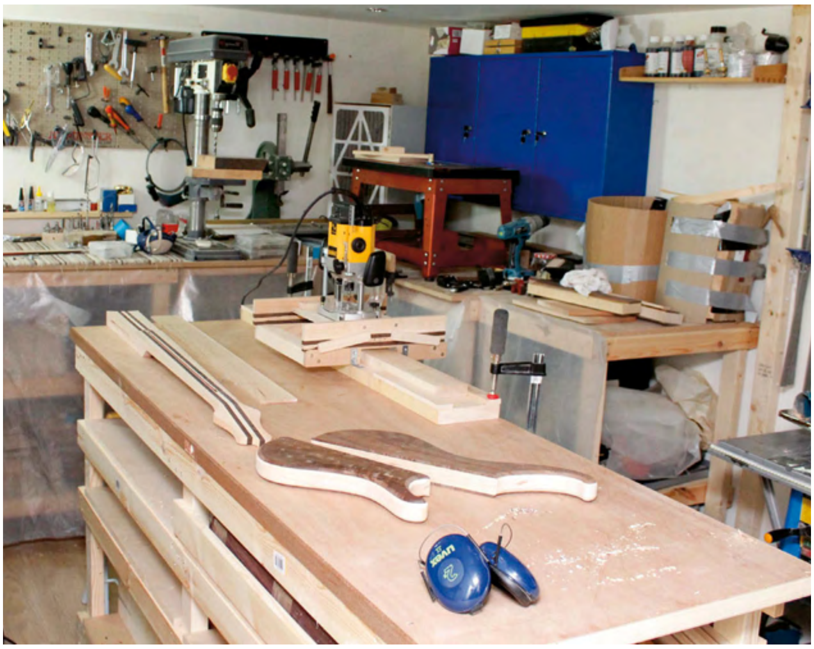
He adds: "For the next year or two, Anaconda will remain a one-man enterprise. Hiring dedicated workshop space is expensive but in order to increase production, it's a necessary step. I can produce four or five instruments at a time with a build time of 12 weeks, but over the next six months, a new model, the Constrictor, will join the ranks of the Crusher and Tribute models, with a potential launch around the LBGS in 2015. I'm also working on a fully passive bass that will feature a tone control with around eight settings, like a tone-styler, along with the ability to switch the pickup coils between series and parallel. The reason for this is that with a passive bass, you lose midrange as you back off the tone control, but with this model, there will be a lot of tonal versatility available to those players who prefer a passive bass."

With so many instruments out there, it must be hard to come up with new ideas, yet Anaconda instruments all adhere to a basic design premise, as Andrew is happy to divulge: "Any luthier has to cater to market requirements, otherwise they won't be in business long. I want my basses to be simple in terms of operation, to look exceptional and to do the job well. I see a lot of basses from European and South American builders that are good pieces of furniture – but there doesn't seem to be an understanding that the construction of the bass can ultimately make a great bass sound even greater."

He continues: "There are so many 'timber sandwiches' that look nice but add nothing. The body core and timber thickness are so important, but by keeping things simple and using tried and tested timbers to add a certain spice, I can add the 'Anaconda flavour' to an instrument. Wenge is still my fingerboard timber of choice: I like to use quartersawn, figured wenge as it adds a distinctive growl but I want to maintain a rich bottom end and broad midrange as much as possible and if a customer wants something specifically, they can have it as an option. I try to make a bass sound right acoustically before the EQ is added. The inherent tone of an Anaconda should be clear and stand out in a mix, as the bass should be heard and felt equally."

With a clear focus on the instruments he wants to produce, the future looks positive for Andrew and Anaconda, although there are goals to be achieved as he explains: "I have to aim high: I would like to attract two major bass players to the brand, to at least use the instruments, to be into the instruments for what they are. I've sown the seeds, but we will have to see what happens over time."

Info: www.anacondabasses.com



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Stone Immaculate

ROBERT DELEO OF STONE TEMPLE PILOTS IS THAT RARE BASSIST: A MAN WHO HAS PLAYED THE WORLD'S BIGGEST STADIUMS BUT NEVER LOST SIGHT OF HIS ROOTS. JOEL MCIVER TALKS TO HIM ABOUT '60S ROCK, THE DREADED GRUNGE TAG AND THE CURSE OF GAS (GEAR ACQUISITION SYNDROME)

Photography by Kevin Estrada

Robert DeLeo knows that he's a lucky man. As he says: "I'm in southern California, how bad can it be?" *BGM* calls for a chat about life at the bass end of Stone Temple Pilots, one of the biggest alternative rock bands to soundtrack 1990s America. "I recently played a gig in honour of Sly Stone with some really cool bassists," he adds. "Any time I can get on stage with Nathan Watts, Marcus Miller and Al Turner, I'm happy."

From time to time we meet a true gear-head in this magazine: a bassist who knows exactly what he wants and wastes no time in getting it, but as soon as he's got it, the next cool bit of kit is calling. Just look at the pics in this feature, snapped by ace photographer Kevin Estrada a few days before our conversation.

"See that double-neck guitar?" says DeLeo. "Every once in a while I get on this Japanese kick and start collecting quirky '60s and '70s stuff from that country. That one is a Telstar – I haven't seen too many of those. It actually sounds really good: the guitar side is like a Danelectro. The mute was still on the bass side when I got it, and I put flatwounds on it. I got it on eBay back when stuff was cheap. I travel around a lot, and all the most desirable basses have pretty much been bought up by now: there's not much around any more if you just want to go into a shop and look around. In the '90s, and even into the 2000s, you had all these great little mom-and-pop shops that had a wonderful amount of instruments – but they're so hard to find now."

Still, DeLeo can console himself with the thought that when cool gear was both findable and (relatively) affordable, he had a pretty good go at buying it all up. "I've been collecting vintage stuff since 1994 – and I bought a warehouse-full of stuff," he chuckles. "For some reason I've become the keeper of basses that look new: I've had great fortune in finding things that are in mint condition, even though they're old. A lot of my basses have been in cases for over 20 years. I have a good friend who had a guitar shop from the late '70s through to 2000, and he has a collection of between 700 and 800 instruments, and I'm lucky enough to be able to call him and have him round up what he has."

"See that Jazz bass?" he adds. "That was one of those that had not been opened for over 20 years. It has all the original case candy – the pricetag, the

polishing cloth, the chord and the strap – it was pretty amazing to find that. That 1971 Fireglo Ricky? I had to get rid of about six basses to get that. I'd been looking for one of those for ages. Before that I had a '76, which I bought around 1994 in New York, and it sounded good so I used it a couple of times on STP records. I bought that thing for £650."

DeLeo's gear addiction first started when he moved from his home state of New Jersey to California to pursue a career in music. On his arrival, he says, a certain humbucking bass caught his eye: "I got hooked on Music Man Stingrays when I moved here in 1984," he explains. "A friend of mine told me to check out Louis Johnson's *Star Licks* cassette: it just blew me away. It's funny, it was right around the time that Richard Ramirez *[a frankly horrible serial killer dubbed the Night Stalker in the mid-1980s – Ed]* was walking around at night, and I was living in the town of Mission Viejo at the time, down in the south of Orange Country. He attacked someone in my town one night and I couldn't go to sleep, so I was up all night learning Louis Johnson licks because of the Night Stalker. I told myself that if he did come to my house, at least I'd have a large, heavy piece of wood in my hand," DeLeo laughs.

With all this tasty bass gear to hand, you'd think that DeLeo would find it easy to decide which ones to take out on the road once STP got big after their debut record, *Core*, in 1992. But no – he's canny enough not to let road crew, or come to think of it, baggage handlers, get their mitts on his prize gear. "I've heard too many horror stories," he says, and we know what he means.

"I learned a lot of slap from a lot of great players"

In any case, in due course DeLeo had a signature bass made for him by Schecter, an instrument that he plays live to this day. "I don't dare take any of the rare stuff out on the road, so I play the Schecters on tour," he tells us. "In 1990 or '91, right around the time we got signed, Schecter started building me some instruments that I was really happy with. I really enjoy that bass: it's basically a new version of an old 1950s P-Bass. I've moved to lighter woods over the years, though: the ones I played in the '90s were so heavy."

In due course, most of DeLeo's bass collection had to go, he tells us, with an audible trace of regret in his tone. "A couple of years ago I said, 'I'm paying money to store guitars I don't even use'," he sighs. "I have the mentality that it takes an idiot to complicate and a genius to simplify, so I started simplifying my life and getting rid of stuff that I really wasn't using. The basses you see on the floor in these pictures are what I actually use. They pretty much define my history as a bass player."

DeLeo's taste for vintage gear applies also to his amps, he tells us. "I use a '61 Bassman head with a Showman 15" cab, split into the power section of the Ampeg BT combo. I like that because it has those midrange rocker switches that makes the bass stand out. That goes into a 1970 Marshall 8x10 cab, with

all the original Celestion speakers in there, and then I run a third direct into a Demeter direct box. That way I can add the grit from the Marshall if I want to."

Asked how he got into bass, DeLeo makes a claim that most of us couldn't match. "I had a sonic appreciation for bass from when I was really young," he says. "A lot of people can't remember things from when they were three, but I can. I was born in 1966, and I remember hearing Motown in 1969, and the music really hit me. When producers were mixing music back then, they definitely put a lot more bass in there, because they knew the songs would be played on car radios that didn't have a lot of low end. That's what I heard and felt when I was three years old, and it steered me towards R&B as far as bass goes. Then Led Zeppelin and the Who came along. John Paul Jones was amazing: if you think about it, he was successfully marrying R&B with hard rock."

"When I heard those bassists, they really caught my attention," he adds. "How could you not recognise what they were doing? I got into progressive rock and fusion around the age of 12, although I was listening it rather than playing it. How could you play what Jaco was doing? There was no YouTube back then: you had a cassette or an eight-track to listen to, and you didn't know if you were playing it right. It was beautiful that it left something to the imagination, but on the other hand the younger generation has everything right in front of them in 3-D. If it helps music, though, so be it."

"I started playing guitar because of my older brother, Dean [Stone Temple Pilots' guitarist]," he says. "I would play his guitar when he was out and try and learn songs from the radio, and put it back in a hurry when he got home. I didn't get that good, of course, because I was playing it secretly, but when Dean joined a band at school, they asked if I wanted to play bass. I was 16 or 17 and they were all 21, so it was a bit intimidating, but I borrowed a bass from their bassist, who was switching to vocals. He gave me a '78 P-Bass, which is a pretty good bass to start on. I played it through a Sunn combo: a lot of sound came out of that amp. I started to learn as many songs as I could from as many artists as possible, and that's what gets you well-versed in music: playing as many kinds of music as you can."

DeLeo was a fingerstyle player from the start, he tells us, simply because he's built that way. "I'm six foot two and I have the arms of a monkey – they're very long!" he laughs. "For that reason, I can't play with my bass high and my wrist bent. I play too hard to do that, anyway, and I end up really hurting myself, so it's natural to have my arm and wrist extended down and just using my fingers. Although playing bass with a pick didn't feel comfortable to me, I did greatly appreciate players like Chris Squire. To this day, he blows my mind: on the first Yes record, he had his tone together right from the start."

Deleo's bass education included a lot of slap, as you'd expect from someone schooled in 1970s R&B, but ultimately it didn't become the prime tool in his bass arsenal, he tells us. "I learned a lot of slap from a lot of great players. I listened to 'Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)' by Sly & The Family Stone, and how could you not pay attention

> “John Paul Jones was amazing: if you think about it, he was successfully marrying R&B with hard rock”

to the bass in that? So I listened to Larry Graham and Louis Johnson and Flea – in fact, I learned a lot of slapping from listening to Flea. I learned from Mark King, too, who is a monster bass player. You saw him and you thought, ‘How the hell is he doing that?’ and he sings as well! Incredible. I wanted to be this master slapper, but I lost interest in it because I knew there were people who were way better than me. My attention went back to songwriting, and as a result my slapping went away.”

The funk stayed with him, however, he admits. “Once in a while I’ll pull it out. Dean and I played in Joe Walsh’s band back in 2004, and the drummer was Steve Ferrone, of the Average White Band. Every now and then in soundcheck we would lay down some funk. Steve is such a brilliant musician. When we locked in, it was a complete Shangri-La for me. It was truly an honour to play with those guys.”

Given this background, it’s not surprising that when Stone Temple Pilots blew up and everyone in the civilised world was referring to them as a grunge band, the term didn’t sit well with DeLeo and his group, who also featured Scott Weiland on vocals and Eric Kretz on drums. “I don’t think anybody from that era really enjoyed being called a grunge band,” he asserts. “I mean, I had my hair slicked back and I was wearing wing-tip shoes *[‘brogues’, as we Limeys refer to them – Ed]*, so I didn’t think of myself as a grunge guy. I just liked writing and performing loud music with a good backbeat. I could write stuff with jazz chords and react harmonically to that on bass. I still enjoy doing that exact same thing to this day.”

Ask DeLeo about the high points of his career as a Stone Temple Pilot and one of them is ‘Vasoline’, the 1994 hit with an immediately identifiable bass part. “On ‘Vasoline’ it was all about the wah pedal,” he says, “just a straight wah on the higher octave and playing a half step. It’s very country, actually, if you hear it on its own. That came about in the studio: our producer Brendan O’Brien – who is the perfect person to make records with – showed me a lot. He had a large collection of vintage gear: every time you went into the studio it was like a vintage carnival. We would grab whatever was laying around and try stuff out.”

Recently, STP has been through a singer change, with Weiland enduring what is referred to in the media as ‘personal issues’ and his place taken by Linkin Park singer Chester Bennington. “Everything is great with the band,” says DeLeo. “Chester is an awesome human being, man. We have our own label and we’re making music out of my basement, so we’re back to where we all started.” The new, Bennington-led line-up debuted in 2013 with the *High Rise* EP, a five-tracker which DeLeo describes as the starting-point for where STP intend to go.

“The *High Rise* EP was a lot of fun,” he enthuses. “We got to do that here in my home studio. There’s a certain inspiration that you feel when you can go downstairs, turn the lights on and do it right in your home. It’s the same with bass playing: it’s amazing how you can purchase an instrument and it can inspire you.”

“I think you always evolve as a bass player,” he concludes. “It comes and goes like the tide. It’s been a 20-plus-year journey and I keep trying to evolve. I’ll try and make every song speak as best as possible.” Wise words, that man. ■

Info: www.stonetemplepilots.com

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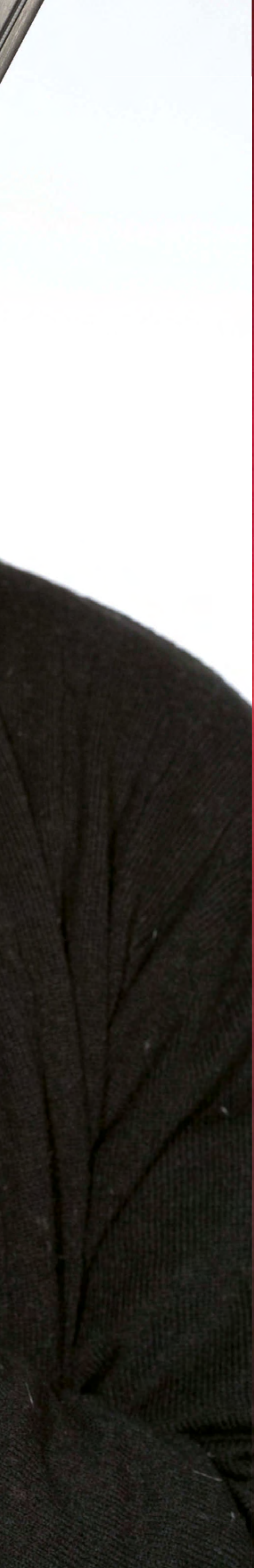

MAGNUM FORCE

POST-PUNK LEGEND JAH WOBBLE CHATS TO HUGH GULLAND ABOUT LIFE AT THE TOP OF THE BASS TREE

Photography by Tina K

Announcing his presence in 1978 with the soul-shaking bassnotes of PIL's debut single and album, 'enthusiastic amateur' Jah Wobble entered the post-punk fray as a seemingly fully-evolved talent. Touting a fluid sound grounded somewhere between the deep resonance of dub reggae and krautrock's adventurousness, Wobble's unfettered sense of expression asserted itself further on PIL's seminal second album *Metal Box*, and a multitude of his own projects since. Reconnecting a couple of years ago with original PIL guitarist Keith Levene for the Metal Box In Dub gigs, the pair completed an album of new material, *Yin & Yang*, which found the old PIL dynamic still sparking.

Jah's pioneering work on the early PIL material represented a definite break from the dominance of the blues-rock format. His approach to the instrument turns out to have been largely intuitive, tells us: "Yeah, I was lucky. I kind of picked up the bass, I knew how to make it work, and I did these pattern modes. Basically, I work in patterns: I wasn't interested particularly in just peddling the root note of the chords of the guitarist. And then I was fortunate, because I've never been short of a bass-line, and I was able just to work bass-lines. And I came up with a line, they liked it, and they'd put something to it. So rather than being the poor old bass player who normally has to play second fiddle to the guitarist, that's how it was."

The deep bass sounds Jah was experiencing at Jamaican blues parties would prove to be a pivotal influence, he adds. "When I first went to blues parties as a kid, the bass hit you in the stomach, like a waveform hitting you, which I suppose is what it is. It took me to another world. And I'd never have been a guitarist, because I've got great big hands."

Wobble had little truck with tuition materials when he set out to hone his craft, as he explains: "I liked music, and I liked bass-led music, and just at the time I began playing – or for the last year or two before that, for the first time ever – bass had really come to the fore in recorded music. I think that had a big effect on me. It was all fortunate timing, really. I couldn't wait to get on it, I was born to do it – that was the feeling."

"I have had one other thing," he adds, to our surprise. "I did clay pigeon shooting. I'd never done it before, but I was quite handy. They said 'You've done this before haven't you?' and I hadn't! I was knocking them all out the sky, even the sneaky ones they were shooting along the ground... Anyway, it took me three attempts to pass my driving test, and I'm not a bad footballer, but bass, I had a clear idea. Once you have a clear idea about bass, that means you start to have a clear idea about music principles. It's quite a medieval thing, it's modal, it's not to do with chords. I've since learned to write using chords, that natural kind of composition. But it's all about patterns, and kind of trying to be baroque in a way."

When quizzed about which other players he admires most, Wobble naturally looks to Jamaica first. "I'm a big fan of [Aston] 'Family Man' Barratt," he says, "because that was so off the wall, with such strange phrasing. Listen to the Bob Marley bass-lines, listen to the bass on those Marley songs... People like Robbie Shakespeare, too – a direct, efficient sort of bass player. And there were people like Cecil McBee, who played with

"IT'S ALL ABOUT PATTERNS, AND KIND OF TRYING TO BE BAROQUE IN A WAY"

Expansions, Pharoah, people like that. I was listening to Weather Report today, and we're doing a modern jazz thing at the moment. I like Jaco Pastorius, but Alphonso Johnson was the bassist. He played with Weather Report for a while, and I liked him because he grooved, and I like groove players. Pastorius obviously was a technical player – a wizard, an incredible player – but I actually preferred Alphonso Johnson. They did one album and it's just groovy, I like that kind of groove. Not so many players can groove."

As far as his choice of instrument goes, Wobble will be forever identified with his distinctive Ovation bass. "It's a Magnum," he tells us. "Funnily enough I've been using a Yamaha BB for the jazz thing, it's a Yamaha thing. They told me – and they might have been saying a load of bollocks to me – but that it's been spun around in a machine so the molecules point a certain way. It doesn't look much but it really has got a full-bodied sound, it's exact. The Magnum's another thing, they're bloody heavy, and it's got really terrific overtone on it. And it's the subtones, the subharmonics, that really make the bass. With modern basses back in the 1980s and 1990s, it became all about getting rid of the ghastly horrible subharmonics and overtones, [but] that's what I like, it gives it the character. It's heavy, very heavy wood, it's got an incredibly dense resonance – it's fantastic for dub. At the same time, you can really play it, and all the strings sound good. The E string's fantastic on a Fender, but you go up to the G string and it gets progressively a little bit weedier."

In PIL's early videos, Jah is often seen playing seated, but this was not part of their anti-pop star stance, as it turns out. "I found it easier to play sitting down, and I still like sitting down," says the great man. "It just felt natural. In the studio you'd often play seated, and it was easier, certainly when I was starting. It was about really playing in time, and being really focused and, every note being as focused, and concentrating on not being sloppy. That's what I knew you had to be, really tight, and in time, and clear, and I've kind of stuck with that."

As far as amplification and accessories go, Wobble has made some recent changes to his traditional setup. "I was [using] Ampeg, but the big change is, I'm now using Ashdown, what they call the Big Bastard. That's what they call it," he chuckles. "For the last studio session, I had an Ashdown and I just loved it, I thought it was the business. I use Rotosound strings, 88s, the black nylon ones. I never thought I'd ever use nylon, but I have been using them for the real dub stuff. I thought it was a real bad choice at one time, but now there's metal in the core, and I quite liked them. It's all in the fingertone of course, all in the phrasing. I use them on the Magnum, and it's pretty heavy."

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"Metal is a hard form of music to make interesting bass-lines for. Unlike more melodic styles, you don't tend to have much of a chord structure to play within, so you have to be inventive to stand out. Firstly, focus on getting the right tone. You need to work out where you fit in sonically, because if you don't you'll get lost in the mix. Then learn to play in context. Listen to the guitar parts and let the guitarists have what they want and find a way to fit in. Also let the producer make certain calls on the bass-lines. Some of my favourite licks have been cut out during recording, because they're just a bit too busy. Remember the bass holds everything together and bridges the gap between rhythm and melody. If you can't do those things, well, maybe start your own band called Primus!"

FROM POUNDING OUT THRASH METAL WITH EXODUS TO FRONTING HIS OWN OUTLAW COUNTRY BAND, JACK GIBSON IS MORE THAN YOUR AVERAGE HEADBANGER, SAYS BEN COOPER

Each genre of music has its influential acts: those that did more than others to drive the form on to new heights, pushing the boundaries and making it new. These are the bands that non-fans most readily identify when asked to 'name a (insert genre) band'. In thrash metal those bands are Megadeth, Slayer, Anthrax and Metallica. But each genre also has its unsung heroes, bands who elicit adoration from fans – bands like Exodus. Critically and commercially successful during the 1980s, Exodus has had a particularly rocky history, with numerous line-up changes, extended hiatuses and the tragic early deaths of band members. Jack Gibson has been holding down bass duties in the band since 1997, dealing out crushing metal riffs with the speed and precision that are the hallmarks of the genre. It seems, though, that landing the gig was partly due to happy coincidence.

"In 1996 I was playing bass with Gary [Holt, Exodus guitarist] and Tom [Hunting, the band's drummer] in a band called War Dance," he says. "Exodus had been on hiatus, but eventually War Dance morphed into Exodus, and seeing as I was already there they asked me to stay on. Tim Bogert once told me you need to be in the right place at the right time." And so Jack's long association with the band began – but let's rewind and find out how he got his start on the four-stringed wonder.

"I started out as a bass player," he says. "I realised that all my friends were playing guitar, so I made a decision to play an instrument that would be in demand. It's turned out to be a good decision." Unlike many musicians in the rock and metal world, Jack didn't go down the self-taught route, instead choosing to study bass guitar at the prestigious Bass Institute Of Technology in Hollywood. There he learned the ins and outs of bass playing from some of the best in the business, including his hero Billy Sheehan.

"Billy is my big influence, along with Geddy Lee," he says. "I remember seeing him play with Talas back in about 1985 or '86. They were supporting Rising Force and I just couldn't believe you could do that on a bass. I decided then that I wanted to do that, but in a thrash metal setting. Getting to learn from Billy at BIT was amazing, but I have to say that I've learned a lot from guitarists and other musicians too."

So what advice would an educated metal bassist hand out to those of us looking to make inroads in our playing? "Practise every kind of finger exercise you can," Jack tells us. "Train your hands to work through any movement that could be required of them. You can even do these things sitting in front of the TV. A lot of it is just muscle memory. That way, when you're actually playing, you don't need to commit any brainpower to executing licks. Other than that, the most important thing is to play with other musicians because nothing helps you get better than playing music. Other people will push you beyond your limits, and that is the best way to grow as a player."

The Sound Of Thrash

"My first bass was a Yamaha BB, and I still have it. In fact I'm playing BB basses to this day, I love the way they feel. I run my bass into a Line 6 wireless unit and then a Little Labs Multi Z-Pip DI box that goes straight to front of house, and it sounds amazing. On stage I go into a TC Electronic Blacksmith head, which is absolutely the best head I've ever heard. Cabs-wise I use two 4x10 TC Electronic cabs. As for tone, I like a sort of piano tone for bass, a bit like [Anthrax bassist] Frank Bello's tone, especially the sound he got on *Among The Living*. I go for a crispy and metallic sound, but not clicky."

Thrash metal isn't particularly known as bass-centric music, although there are exceptions, of course. With the crushing speed and intensity of the guitar riffs and drum parts, it's all most bassists can do to double up riffs and drive out root notes to hold everything together. The reliance on unison riffing for maximum intensity means that bassists don't have much room to manoeuvre – so how does a bassist influenced by Billy Sheehan and Geddy Lee deal with this reality?

"Well, sometimes Gary has to calm me down a bit," he chuckles. "Usually he's right too. Live I tend to flex out a bit more, throw in some fills and little parts that aren't on the albums. A recording needs space and fewer notes to sound clear and tight. It's always helpful to remember that the bass has a particular role to fulfil. Just playing the basic Exodus bass parts is more than most bassists get to play anyway, so really I feel quite lucky as a player."

Aside from Exodus, Jack also fronts an outlaw country band called Coffin Hunter, which he characterises as music to have fun and drink whisky to, and a far cry from thrash. "It's got a Hank III [grandson of country legend Hank Williams] vibe to it. Tom from Exodus plays drums and I've got Larry Otis on pedal steel. He used to play for Ike and Tina Turner."

With Exodus's new album, *Blood In, Blood Out*, it seems that the veteran band are back on top again. "It's always good to know that your music is reaching people," says Jack. "The one thing about Exodus is our no-compromise attitude. That's what our fans have come to expect, and that's what they love, so we always aim to deliver." ■

Blood In, Blood Out **is out now on Nuclear Blast. Info: www.exodusattack.com**

Alphonso Johnson

HAPPY CAMPERS

Kevin 'Brandino' Brandon

Andy Irvine

MIKE FLYNN HEADS TO THE WARWICK BASS CAMP TO DISCOVER WHY IT'S BECOMING ONE OF THE HOTTEST EUROPEAN BASS EVENTS OF THE YEAR

The term 'Disneyland for bassists' might seem over the top when describing Warwick's factory and headquarters in a small village in the middle of the German countryside. Yet the company's third annual bass education camp and public open day is gaining legendary status among the global bass community. A full roll-call of every low-end lover present would leave room for little else in this report: let's just say that the 85 campers who paid between £650 and £850 ('early birds' can get a lower price) for seven nights' accommodation, five days of classes, jams, food and airport transfers were catered for in every sense.

Victor Wooten is a galvanising figure in the realm of bass education, having established his successful Wooten Woods Bass Nature camps over the last decade, so his presence here is a ringing endorsement of this event. It was Wooten's friend and collaborator Steve Bailey who first proposed this venture three years ago to Warwick, and perhaps taking inspiration from Vic's bass camps and utilising the beautiful surroundings, the Warwick week felt relaxed, with egos left firmly at the door.

Victor Wooten

David Ellefson

Notable tutors this year alongside Victor and Reggie Wooten were David Ellefson, Stu Hamm, Bobby Vega, Adam Nitti, Armand-Sabal Lecco, Alphonso Johnson, Steve Bailey, Andy Irvine and Gary Willis, adding up to a unique gathering of some of the most experienced and respected bassists on the planet. With such a range of experience and styles for the students to draw on, each of the 20 daily classes were divided into a comprehensive range of topics from music theory, reading music and ear-training, to practical applications for scales, slapping, tapping, rhythm and groove development.

Students had to be up bright and early to catch the 9am start time for the first class of the day. Arriving later in the week, BGM's first port of call was Victor Wooten's final masterclass, first thing on the Friday morning. While other tutorials dealt with the finer points of harmony (Jonas Hellborg) and ear training (Adam Nitti), Wooten's masterful communication to students is second to none, and it was refreshing to witness how he went about demonstrating this to the class. Laying down a simple G minor chord vamp on his looper, he then played a diatonic ascending bass-line while a student improvised on top. His goal was to show that matching simple harmonic movement, and a gradual build in volume from quiet to loud, enabled the bass not only to support the soloist but to propel and inspire them too.

One of the key moments in this final session was when Victor covered the chromatic notes of a scale. 'This is the scale you probably use the least,' he said with a knowing look to the group. He emphasised this by playing a melodic line and then stopping on a 'wrong' note, which he then moved to the next note in the scale, resolving the tension the passing tone had created while also demonstrating that far from being 'wrong', these chromatic notes are not to be feared.

To further emphasise his point he then played a solo over G minor using only the chromatic passing tones – yet emphasising timing, phrasing and feel to great effect the results flowed and sounded musical. He then a played stilted, jerky solo with all the 'right' notes, which by contrast sounded terrible. He then took a vote on which one was better, the result being the first one because the feel, timing and ideas all flowed.

But the Bass Camp wasn't all about cramming one's head and hands with all these top tips from world-class pros; it was also about networking, and more importantly hanging! As the week of classes drew to a close, more international guests arrived, notably Metallica bass star Robert Trujillo who was set to headline with his bass supergroup Mass Mental. In the informal evening jam, a killer version of AC/DC's 'Back In Black' with Megadeth bass don David Ellefson and Bon Jovi guitarist Phil X, things got even heavier with Trujillo funk-rocking it up with Wooten and Bailey.

The open day saw the several hundred members of the public welcomed into the grounds of Warwick's headquarters for a day of live performances, beer, food and meet-and-greets, with a huge number of specially invited guests, flown in especially for the day. The factory tours were especially enlightening as visitors got to gawp at the two-million-euro computer-controlled machine, the only one of its type, which precision-finishes every neck for each model of Warwick bass. With frets placed into each fingerboard with laser-guided accuracy, it really was breathtaking.

The queues snaking back from the signing area were almost as impressive as the sheer number of stellar bassists all flown in for the day. These included UK stars such as Scott Devine, Steve Lawson, Colin Edwin, Neil Murray, Dean Mark, Bill Banwell, Jack Stevens and Mike Mondesir, alongside international names such as Kai Eckhardt, Lorenzo Feliciati, Pascal Mulot, Divinity Roxx, Evan Brewer, Nik West, Bakithi Kumalo, John B Williams, Jerry Jemmot and Chuck Rainey among many others. As the day drew to a close Mass Mental delivered a blistering funk-metal set with Armand Sabal-Lecco and Trujillo locking basses in spectacular fashion, alongside Candiria drummer Ken Schalk, Ugly Kid Joe singer Whitfield Crane and singer Benji Webb, fresh from a festival on the Isle Of Wight! Trujillo was chuffed with the audience, saying 'The last time Mass Mental played in 1990, there were about 10 people in the audience!'

Warwick had saved the best for last, with the closing night party rounding off a mind-blowing week with a superb meal, and a final bass jam featuring some more outstanding playing from the faculty – with Jonas Hellborg and drum legend Chester Thompson stealing the show with a stunningly beautiful take on John Coltrane's 'Naima' – and some appropriately dazzling fireworks. Ultimately, the feeling many left with was that they'd become part of a large extended musical family, one which can't wait to be reunited again next year and for many more years to come.

Bass Calling

ROBERT LEVON BEEN OF THE CALL AND BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB REVEALS THE JOYS OF LIFE AS BASSIST IN NOT ONE BUT TWO BANDS...

"I never really wanted to play bass until I realised it was way, way easier than learning guitar: I think if it had been difficult and had too many strings, then I probably would have given it up. I mean, I could probably pull it off, but you don't want to just be okay at an instrument that you're playing in front of thousands of people. And frankly I've seen a lot of guitar players who phone it in, but even more bass players that practically text it in. The funny thing, though, is that until I had to learn the Call's songs in my dad's band, I really thought I was doing something difficult in Black Rebel Motorcycle Club!

"I always try to find a way to get away with doing a song without the bass, when recording. With every song I like to strip it all down and only use the most essential elements, so I tend to put myself on the chopping block first. I actually like it when I don't make the cut sometimes, because you know that if you can live without it, then it wasn't meant to be.

"I remember I tried to play my father's old Ampeg fretless early on, maybe because it was fairly seductive to look at, but that bass was kind of his signature thing that he always played, so I couldn't take it on. I made it sound pretty awful though for a while, so I'll take credit for that. My favourite bass ever is my old red Epiphone Rivoli EB2, which I bought around 20 years ago in a pawnshop in San Francisco. The guy in the shop didn't really know what he had, so I kept telling him it looked like the bass was damaged or worn down – but I was lying through my teeth because I wanted him bring down the price. In the end he gave it to me for $600, which was insane because the bass was flawless. The light weight and short scale of the Epiphone completely changed the way I played: I immediately felt like I was driving a superfast race car rather than some clunky pickup truck, which is what most other basses feel like to me. I'll admit that Fender Precision basses have bigger, fuller tones, but in my heart I'm a race car driver.

"I can't really approach any new album thinking that I'm going to extract a classic tone from something else and force it into this band, or this song, or this recording. At the end of the day you're at the mercy of what's right for that song, or what is needed to complement that guitarist's sound, or the landscape of the drums that you track. Right now I'm finishing up a tour with BRMC, but I've been talking with the guys in the Call about possibly doing some more shows, if we can figure out a way to get everyone together again."

The Call's album A Tribute To Michael Been is out now on Caroline/Universal.

The EBS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive pedal is the result of collaboration between EBS Professional Bass Equipment and legendary bass player Billy Sheehan. It is based on his concept of mixing together a clean signal with a distorted to be able to preserve low frequencies and find balance between distortion and definition.

The unique feature of including a *Clean* and a *Drive Loop* offers unlimited pre-post mix tone shaping possibilities. Just insert any other device you'd like within each loop to 'pimp' the effect into your own signature drive!

To check out the Billy Sheehan Signature Drive follow the EBS Blog with daily reports from the NAMM show between 24th-27th January,at **www.ebssweden.com/ebsblog** and then visit your local EBS retailer.

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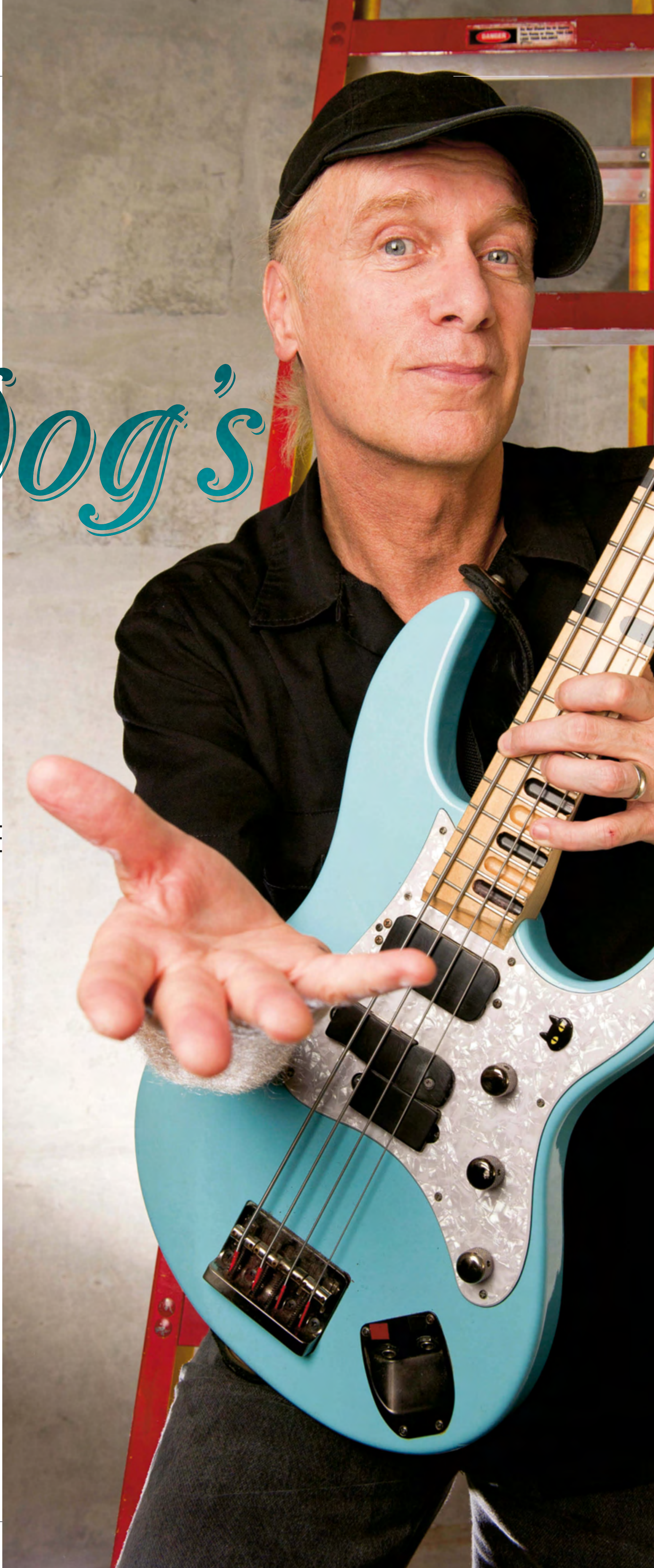
W W W . E B S S W E D E N . C O M

A Dog's Life



WITH HIS NEW BAND THE WINERY DOGS, BASSIST EXTRAORDINAIRE BILLY SHEEHAN HAS RETURNED TO THE TOP OF THE ROCK SCE MIKE BROOKS GETS THE LOW-DOWN

Photography by Tina K

"I almost didn't make it, I was starting to fade out. But I got through it, I've never passed out on stage… yet!" The words of Billy Sheehan, describing the previous night's show in Wolverhampton, a gig that he describes as "rough" due to the heat and humidity – but here at London's Camden Underworld, Billy looks refreshed, renewed and ready to go for the show tonight.

In little more than a year, the Winery Dogs – also featuring sometime Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy and ex-Poison guitarist/vocalist Richie Kotzen – has travelled the world, re-establishing the idea of a 'supergroup' and selling out shows in the process. With numerous projects on the boil on a regular basis, Billy is in the enviable position of playing with a host of great drummers, which must be a lot of fun. He concurs, "Absolutely. Mike and I have a weird, telepathic, ESP where we just do things – I don't know how it happens. I've known Mike for a while, the Dream Theater guys got together because they were Talas fans. Mike is a joy – fun, exciting and entertaining, and with Dennis Chambers, drummer in my band Niacin, it's the same thing, like some Vulcan mind-meld occurs where you just lock in with them. To me, the drummer is the band."

With so many projects, it must be tricky to keep so much material in the brain? Billy laughs, "I only have so much RAM. One year, I did five different shows, and it was no problem, but on show four, I couldn't have gone back to do show one. I don't always commit stuff to memory: some I do and I will remember always, some I can figure out and if I can play it in my head, I can play it with my hands. We just did some Niacin shows and learning some of that stuff – I had no idea what I did. I was blazing away and it was going by super fast… I didn't know where to start."

It must be a challenge to come up with original and inspiring bass parts for each band, but Billy takes it all in his stride. "When you look at a cake, you only see the frosting! I work on a lot of stuff on my iPhone: I have hundreds of recorded video snippets with ideas, parts of songs and bass-lines. There's really no limit when it comes to writing and creating. I have ways to get around creative blocks: I start listening to something completely different or pick up a 12-string guitar for example. After playing for over 40 years, I'm just scratching the surface of what the possibilities are musically. Technique-wise, I'm doing a lot of flamenco picking now on bass. It's an unusual thing, as well as a bunch of different ways of playing that I've never done before."

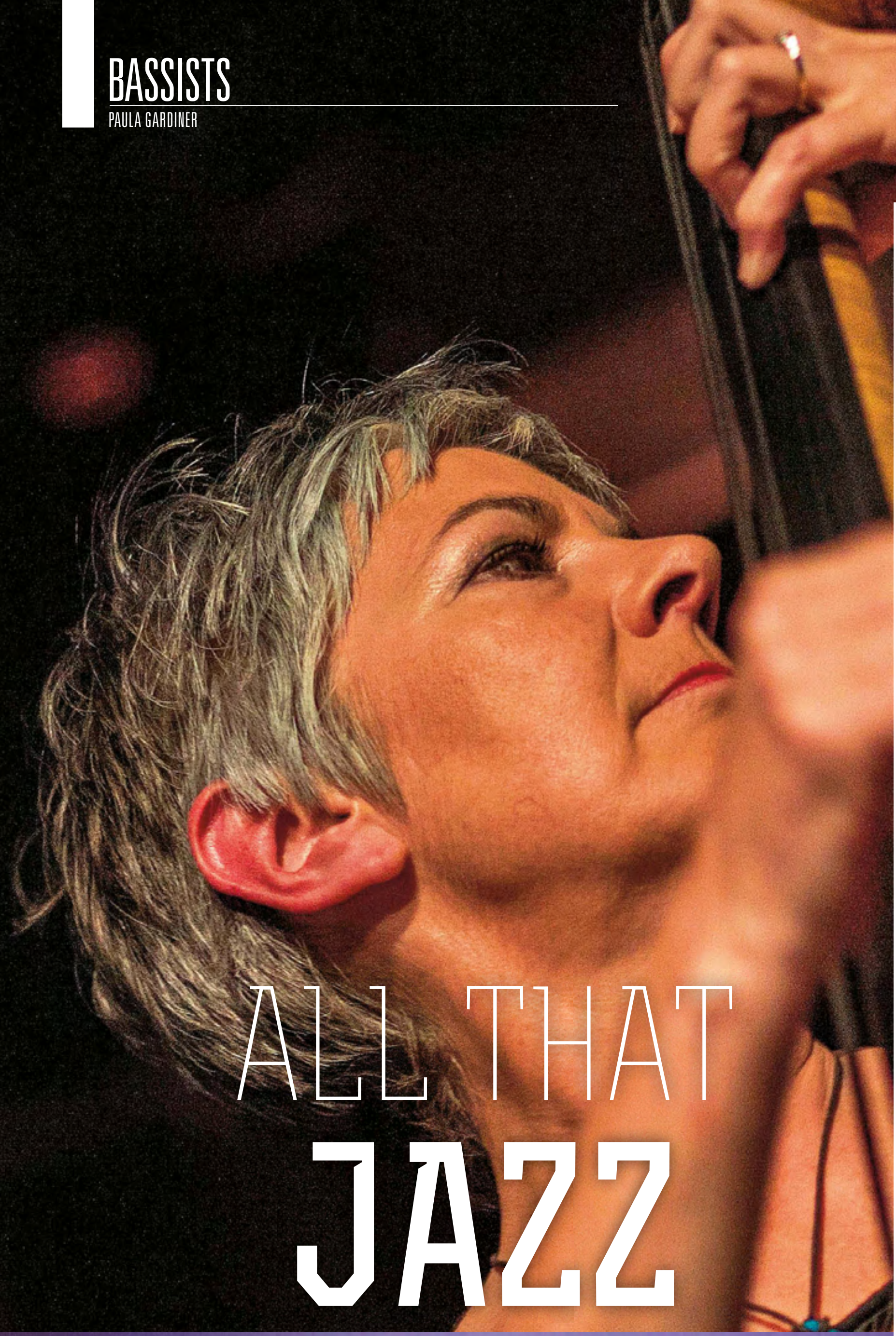
One point that Billy tries to communicate to bassists and musicians through his clinics and tuition videos is to challenge yourself, something he had to do when working with Steve Vai. "Playing with Steve was different, because I don't do that, that's not my thing. I love Steve, I think his music is amazing but it was a whole different discipline, I had to play what he wanted me to play, the way he wanted me to play it, which I don't do. I always challenge artists to do that thing that you can't do or don't do, get out of your comfort zone, try making a left turn."

As the subject of two of the most popular tuition videos before the advent of YouTube, has Billy considered producing an updated DVD? He smiles, "I'd love to. I did the books and DVDs for Alfred Publishing not so long ago, it was important for me to show the basics too. A lot of guys did videos for years to show off their licks, because they had no record deal, no songs, no band, and it gave instructional stuff a bad name. My point in doing them was to show stuff so that you walked away from it a better player, but it wasn't a showcase for me. There's nothing I can do that you can't: I'm a firm believer in that."

The fabled Sheehan bass and equipment arsenal has stabilised recently. The racks of gear are now much reduced, with Hartke LH1000 and HA5500 amps powering AK115 and 410 cabinets and a relatively modest pedal-board featuring two EBS Billy Sheehan Signature Drive pedals, two MXR M87 Bass Compressor pedals and an EBS Octabass pedal. "I may have been the first bassist with a rack of gear," he muses. "They looked complicated but they were simple. If something went wrong mid-show, I knew my rack like the back of my hand because I built it, I opened every case, looked at all the electronics, and did all the wiring between the units myself."

Mr Big fans will be pleased to know that a new album is due out in the autumn, backed up by a small European tour and then followed by a trip to Asia. However, the globetrotting tours of years gone by may now be a thing of the past, as Billy explains. "Mr Big isn't a touring thing for some of the guys any more. I understand: I still love them and they're my brothers. We may do one-off shows now and again. It's great that I'm in a band with Mike Portnoy, because Mike would play three shows a day, every day from now until 2040. I can do that too, and I need to play live a lot so if I relied on Mr Big, I would only play a short tour every two to three years. We may do another record, we won't break up, but it will be a limited thing – and that's the way life goes sometimes."

Info: www.thewinerydogs.com



ALL THAT JAZZ

IN A REFRESHING CHANGE FROM YOUR USUAL SWEATY ROCK BASSISTS, WE PRESENT AN INTERVIEW WITH PAULA GARDINER, HEAD OF JAZZ AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND DRAMA IN CARDIFF, AND A LONG-SERVING UPRIGHT BASSIST AND RECORDING ARTIST

Interview: Joel McIver

"This is the first and only real job I've ever had," says Paula Gardiner when *BGM* meets her for a chat at this year's Brecon Jazz Festival in south Wales. Well, if you're only going to have one job, you might as well aim high, and it doesn't get much higher in the double bass world than heading up the jazz department at Cardiff's prestigious Royal College of Music and Drama. What's more, Paula was recently nominated for a Parliamentary Jazz Award for education thanks to her work in the department, which offers students opportunities to perform as well as professional training relating to the music industry.

"The College was looking for someone to create and co-ordinate a jazz programme back in 2001," she recalls. "They asked me in the interview what I thought was important for jazz training, and I had a lot of ideas about that, because I'd previously set up my own workshops. The two roles of academic and jazz musician complement each other well indeed: I have an allowance of time to pursue my own personal development. Obviously I can't be out playing bass until the small hours every night when I have a full-time job, and I'm a parent too, so it's a question of balance. But when I play, it's so enjoyable: it still feels fresh and exciting."

After many years touring with her own Paula Gardiner Trio and the Dave Stapleton Quintet, and recording three solo albums and many collaborations, is she still evolving as a bassist? "In anyone's musical development, there are times when you feel that you've plateaued in terms of your playing, and that there are periods when you evolve," she muses. "But I think that's probably psychological: you never really stop evolving if you keep playing. The old adage is that once you've put in a certain number of hours of playing, it always comes back to you, although in the specific case of the double bass it's a demanding instrument, there's no two ways about that."

Talking of which, Paula has much sympathy for bass guitar players who find the old double bass a bit difficult to play. "I've been through it," she tells us. "Not only was I a guitarist before I played bass, I was a classical guitarist who then switched to jazz. But moving to the double bass doesn't have to be as painful as you think. Choose the setup and the strings that suit you. Don't go for a super-high setup at first, unless that is specifically what you want. It's also important to get your posture correct right from the start, otherwise you'll have shoulder pains later on. Don't be afraid of the double bass – it's such a great sound. Once you've heard that sound, you'll go through anything to get it."

Quite aside from playing the double bass, how about the basic 'jazz fear' that so many rockers feel when we realise how complex the music can be? Paula laughs and replies, "People are only negative to jazz when they haven't experienced it, because they have some notion of what it is. Jazz is different for each individual, of course, but once you see jazz live you realise how much passion and humanity is in there. Perhaps people don't think those things are there, or maybe they think that jazz is old fashioned. Jazz has always been a young person's music in a sense: the old guys who play it now were young rebels when they created it, after all."

So where should wannabe jazz bassists start their education, we ask? Paula explains, "There are so many amazing bassists to learn from. I'm a big fan of Charlie Haden; I love the energy of Charles Mingus. I admire Paul Chambers and Sam Jones. Eberhardt Weber, too: his music has been really inspirational to me. Recently I've become a fan of an American trio called the Bad Plus. They have a fantastic bass player called Reid Anderson. They cover everything from Nirvana and Blondie to Stravinsky and Bach. Jazz is in a good place in 2014 – there's no doubt about that."

Info: www.rwcmd.ac.uk/departments/jazz.aspx

ELRICK EVO 8

FOUR STRINGS GOOD, EIGHT STRINGS BAD? NOT SO, SAYS KEV SANDERS

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

Prior to picking up this Elrick, I'd only played two other eight-string basses before – a Manson made for John Paul Jones and a BC Rich Bich. The latter was a bit of a disappointment, but the Manson played well and sounded awesome. I could sense that here was an instrument with real potential and possibilities. Here at *BGM* HQ we're big fans of Chicago luthier Rod Elrick: can the great man deliver the goods with eight strings?

BUILD QUALITY

For the last 20 years Elrick have done things properly: you'll find no heavy machinery for shaping bodies or cutting out neck blanks at their workshop. All their basses are formed by hand, Rob Elrick's hand to be precise: his instruments ooze thoughtful design and skilful competence.

It's difficult to be objective when an instrument looks this good, and it's always worth reminding ourselves that a collection of beautiful and rare timbers does not necessarily make a great bass. However, you can't help but be impressed by the quality and accuracy of the EVO 8 as soon as you pick it up. Here's an example of what I mean: turn the bass over, and you'll see that the back cover for the control cavity is cut from the same piece of ash as that used for the body: a mark of quality, certainly, but not unusual for a handmade bass at this level. What you'll only rarely come across however, is this level of accuracy and care. The fit is perfect, the grain matches exactly and the cover looks like it would be watertight. It's one of many examples of the high quality of workmanship evident throughout this bass.

The ash body is topped with a vividly quilted maple top, which should indicate a bright and focused sound, particularly when you add the three-piece quarter-sawn maple neck and that hard, unusually coloured fretboard. It's pink ivory, a rare and expensive wood from South Africa, which is perfect for a bass guitar fingerboard. It has a similar tonal character to ebony, but without the harsh edge which that wood can have. Tiny black dot markers are neatly inlaid into the edge of the fretboard, the front being clear of any decoration – a wise decision given the striking appearance of that pink ivory wood.

Several design and construction techniques used here remind me of another great luthier, Fodera – in particular, the headstock construction and form. Both bass-makers use this kind of strong and neat scarf joint that all but does away with the need for a volute to strengthen the area behind the nut where the truss rod channel ends. Unlike the Fodera, which uses a dovetailed 'set neck' join between the body and neck, the Elrick has a socket cut deeply into the body, into which the neck fits tightly, rigidly secured with five countersunk hex-bolts.

All this wonderful lumber and clever construction wouldn't count for much without good pickups and preamp, and they don't come much better than this brace of Bartolini dual coils and the three band EQ. Elrick has used this system for over 10 years now: it's simple to use and versatile, elevating this fine piece of workmanship from being a mere looker to a really playable musician's instrument.

The whole bass has a thin and even oiled finish. It's beautifully applied and evenly rubbed back, and as well as allowing the bass to resonate freely, it shows off the exceptional colours and grain patterns of the woods.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

The EVO's balance is fine, even with all those tuners on the headstock. The body shape is ergonomic, looks good and given the fact that it has eight strings, the neck profile is surprisingly comfortable, with a depth and width that feels much like that of a five-string.

But I have to say, the sensation of those pairs of strings under your fingers is a bit unnerving to say the least. The short, 32" scale length means that the thinner upper octave strings have a tension which feels comfortable alongside the bass strings, but at first the pairs of strings all feel close together. The first few minutes of playing

"I HAVE TO SAY, THE SENSATION OF THOSE PAIRS OF STRINGS UNDER YOUR FINGERS IS A BIT UNNERVING TO SAY THE LEAST!"

require focus and a conscious effort to make sure you only fret the strings you want to, while dampening the rest.

As you'd expect, the sounds lower down the neck are huge: if your main gig means that you spend your nights nailing down the low end in a blues or rock power trio, I promise you that this bass will make the whole band will sound epic. Trust me on this one, there will be absolutely no shortage of low end. But the EVO not only sounds huge, it's also really musical: soloing high up the neck is a hoot.

The versatile EQ system gives plenty of scope for fine-tuning your sound. It's intuitive to use, with the controls for volume, pan, bass, mid and treble laid out in an arc, following the lower contour of the body. There are also two mini toggle switches just below the bridge: the forward one allows you to select one of three frequencies for the mid control – 250Hz, 600Hz and 800Hz. The second is for switching between active and passive mode. With the pan control slightly biasing the neck pickup and the bass increased a little, you get a wonderfully sweet bass tone, full at the bass end and with a spectrum of frequencies a mile wide from each pair of strings. I suppose you could get a similar effect with an effects unit, but like this, the octaves sound is wholly natural. Once you've heard it and used it, it would be difficult to settle for anything less.

CONCLUSION

This Elrick is stunning. It's hard to see how the quality of either the hardware or the timbers could be any better, it's beautifully made and it sounds great too. But it does take a real shift in your left and right hand technique to play well. When you've got eight strings – even in close pairs – on a fretboard not much wider than a standard five, it takes some getting used to. That said, when you do nail it, it sounds awesome. But then so does a four-string Elrick EVO with a good octave pedal, and for that you don't need to change the way you play at all.

When I reviewed an Elrick five-string a couple of years back, I said then that it struck me as a real musician's instrument: nothing flash, no decoration, just a beautifully-made, great-sounding bass. The same goes for this one. Bear in mind its cost, of course, especially if – as is likely to be the case – it will not be your primary bass. That aside, it's a special instrument, and fantastic to own as part of any bass collection.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE I £3800 (currently available at £2800)
BODY I Ash
TOP I Quilted maple
NECK I 3 piece quarter sawn maple, graphite strengthened
TRUSS ROD I 2 way adjustable
FINGERBOARD I Blush Pink Ivory
SCALE LENGTH I 32"
CONTROLS I Bartolini
TUNERS I Hipshot ultra light
PICKUPS I BARTOLINI DUAL COIL
GIG BAG/CASE? I Included

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS I Stunning instrument that represents incredible value for money, even at full price
MINUS I Nothing, other than the eight strings take some getting used to
OVERALL I This is a brilliant bass and represents great value for money. Go for it!

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★★ (10/10)
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆ (8/10)
VALUE	★★★★★★★★☆☆ (8/10)

SANDBERG
ELECTRA SERIES TT AND VS

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

TWO NEW EXAMPLES FROM THE SANDBERG STABLE LOOK TO OFFER AFFORDABILITY AND KILLER TONE AT A PLAYER-FRIENDLY PRICE, MIKE BROOKS GIVES THEM THE ONCE-OVER

The Sandberg team have been producing consistently high quality basses for a considerable amount of time, and their popularity in the UK has been gradually gathering pace over the last 10 years. What we have here are two basses from the new Electra series, designed to appeal to players on a limited budget who require a bass that delivers without costing the earth. Under review are the TT and VS models, based on Fender Jazz and Precision basses respectively: a Stingray variant is also available. How do these German offerings stack up?

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

SANDBERG ELECTRA SERIES TT 4
PRICE | £569
COLOUR | Crème High Gloss
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Canadian hardrock maple
FINGERBOARD | Rosewood
PICKUPS | Sandberg-designed single-coil x 2
ELECTRONICS | Sandberg-designed 9-volt active/passive, 2-band EQ
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull active/passive), pickup pan, 2-band EQ (bass/treble boost/cut)
TUNERS | California open gear tuners
BRIDGE | Sandberg-designed bridge, three-way adjustable
MADE IN | Korea (assembled in Germany)
NUT WIDTH | 37mm
NECK | Bolt-on, six bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 34" (864mm)
FRETS | 22
WEIGHT | 4kg (8.8lb)
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE | None
GIGBAG/CASE | None

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A good all round bass that delivers everything you would expect a Jazz clone to offer. Sensibly priced, comfortable and playable, as it should be
MINUS | Just lacks the killer punch to stand out from the crowd
OVERALL | A sound purchase, solid, reliable with a good degree of tonal flexibility and classic looks

BGM RATING

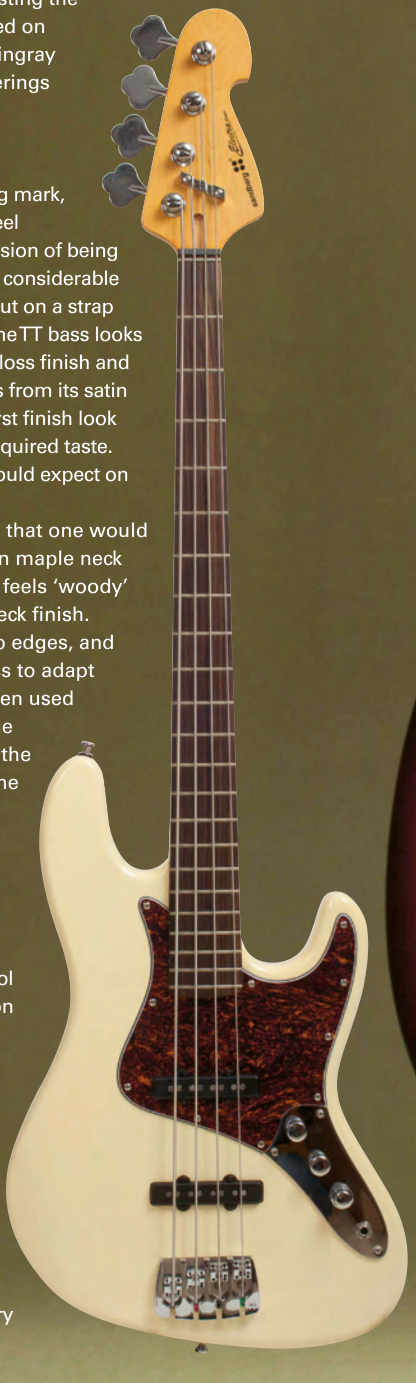
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★★☆☆

BUILD QUALITY

Both basses are reasonably weighted around the 4kg mark, due in no small part to the basswood bodies. They feel substantial and solid, certainly not giving the impression of being lightweight. Surprisingly, both instruments exhibit a considerable headstock bias, but as with most basses, once you put on a strap either bass sits perfectly well on the player's body. The TT bass looks every bit the classic Jazz bass with its Crème High Gloss finish and red tortoiseshell scratchplate, but the VS bass suffers from its satin finish. The colouring and tone of the Tobacco Sunburst finish look great, but the choice of satin over high gloss is an acquired taste. The smooth bodylines and contouring are as you would expect on models such as these.

The TT bass follows the neck profile dimensions that one would associate with a Jazz variant: a sleek, fast Canadian maple neck with a slim profile and narrow nut width. The neck feels 'woody' and natural, in no small part helped by the satin neck finish. The frets are extremely well dressed with no sharp edges, and a good setup and action means this is an easy bass to adapt to, as it feels so familiar. Chrome hardware has been used throughout: a simple but effective three-way bridge design allows the string spacing to be adjusted to the player's requirements, set at 19mm from the off. The Californian open gear machine heads, taken from Sandberg's own California range of instruments, operate smoothly and a supplied Allen key allows the player to adjust the tension of the machine head axis to their liking, a nice touch.

The chrome string retainer, Graph Tech nut and zero fret complete the neck hardware. The four-control layout comprising volume (with a push/pull operation for active/passive switching), pickup pan, bass and treble is simple yet effective with smooth, gradual increases and decreases from each control. The VP model has similar features in terms of construction, hardware and electronics aside from the inevitable single split-coil pickup, featuring one large single magnet for each string, a plain black scratchplate, black hardware and no pickup pan control. Both basses make use of fliptop battery holders on the rear of the bass and it's worth noting that both basses will operate in passive mode without a battery inserted, should that be your preference.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

SANDBERG ELECTRA SERIES VS 4
PRICE | £499
COLOUR | Tobacco matt
BODY | Basswood
NECK: Canadian hardrock maple
FINGERBOARD | Rosewood
PICKUPS | Sandberg-designed split-coil x 1
ELECTRONICS | Sandberg-designed 9-volt active/passive, 2-band EQ
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull active/ passive), 2-band EQ (bass/treble boost/cut)
TUNERS | California open gear tuners
BRIDGE | Sandberg-designed bridge, three-way adjustable
MADE IN | Korea (assembled in Germany)
NUT WIDTH | 37mm
NECK | Bolt-on, six bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 34" (864mm)
FRETS | 22
WEIGHT | 3.7kg (8.1lb)
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE | None
GIGBAG/CASE | None

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A classic bass design with extra tone shaping, excellent feel and playability at a pocket-friendly price
MINUS | Some may see it as just another P-Bass clone, which it is, but it has more to offer through the active EQ
OVERALL | If you are in the market for a Precision-styled bass, this should be on your shopping list

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★★★☆

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

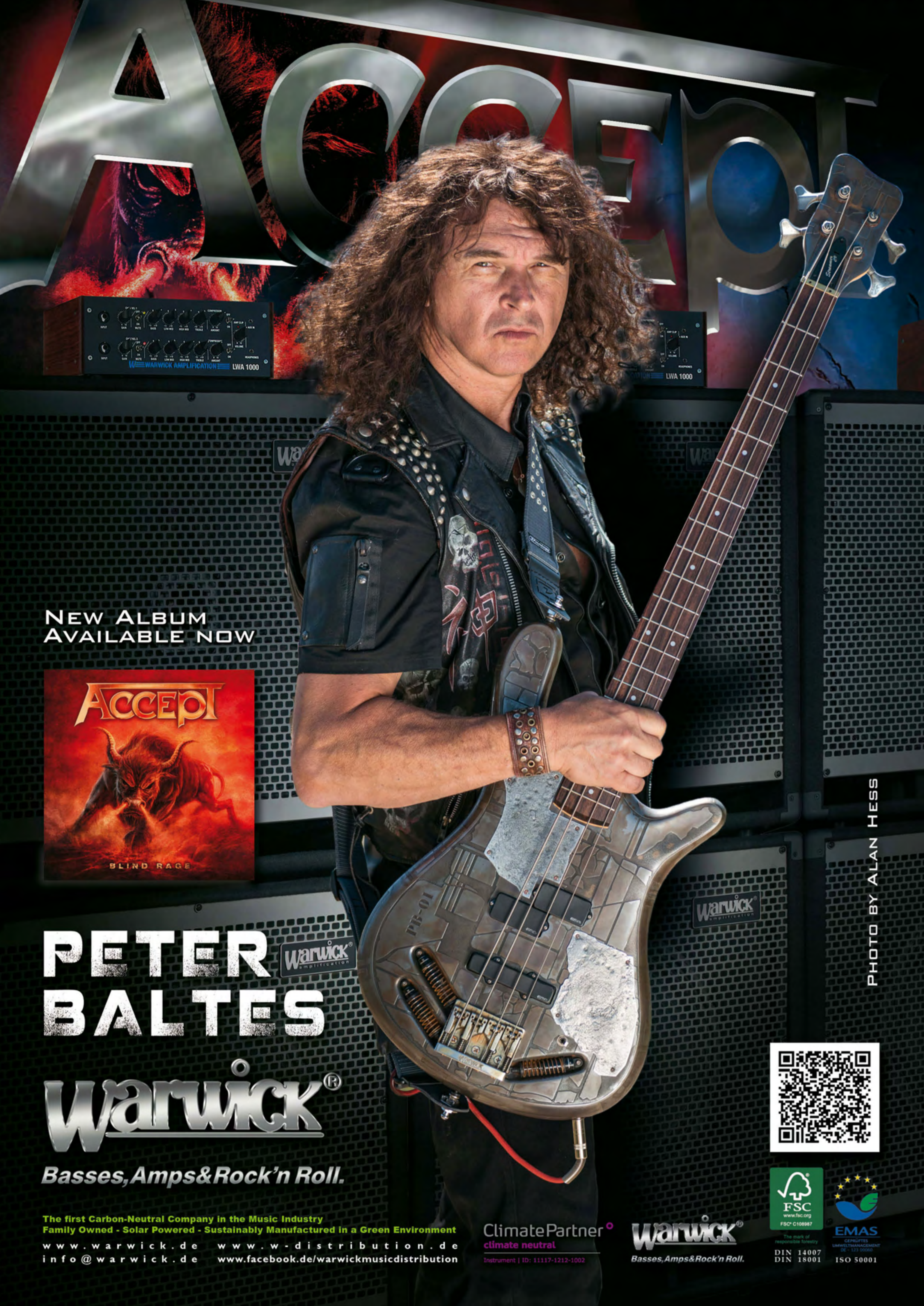
Playing both basses acoustically, there is little tonal difference between them. The body shapes are obviously different and the neck dimensions feel different, although the VS neck doesn't display the familiar rounded, bulky nature that a lot of Precision necks offer. Putting the TT through its paces, and running both pickups at 100 per cent in the centre position, the bass displays all the classic tonal hallmarks of a twin single-coil Jazz bass, rounded with some zip in the top end and a throaty midrange that gives the overall tone some distinction. Adding some bass EQ works wonders, providing some solidity and power to the bottom end. Surprisingly, the treble EQ sounded a little excessive and extreme, so use with caution.

No matter which pickup was used or how the pickups were panned, the bass exhibits a defined woody character that some players may like while others may not: personally, I thought it gave the bass an identity of sorts rather than conforming to the standard Jazz sound. Access to the upper frets was fine, but it became a bit of a reach where the neck joint occurs in order to reach the dusty end of the fingerboard. On the subject of the neck joint, there was a slight gap around the neck pocket – but the neck was undoubtedly firmly attached to the body with its six-bolt attachment, so have no fear.

The VS model was equally impressive in its sonic display, exhibiting all the tonal characteristics that a good Precision bass clone should, yet with some extra 'oomph' to boot. Naturally, the active setting offered more tone shaping and overall power, but the passive option was far from muted in comparison and showed that it was perfectly usable, either as the main tone or as the fail-safe option should it be required. The bass and treble EQ inevitably have a considerable impact on the tone and tonal options available to the player. With both added wisely, this really is a super-powered P-Bass with a considerable amount of body plus an equal amount of grit and twang.

CONCLUSIONS

What we have here are two price-conscious basses that are well made and have been designed to do the obvious things well. To that end, there is little to remark upon or complain about. As gigging instruments, I can't see anyone being disappointed by either bass as they are comfortable to wear, with a sensible weight and tonal options on tap to cope with most styles and playing requirements. The Sandberg name carries some weight and their reputation for solidly built, reliable instruments is definitely growing, but how would either bass stand out from a crowd of similarly spec'd, classically-designed basses? Neither bass carries an excessive price tag and they definitely fit into the 'what have you got to lose' bracket. If a vintage-style active Fender clone is on your shopping list, take a look, try them out and see if they fit the bill.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BERGANTINO
CN212 Cab

KEV SANDERS HAILS A CAB FROM AMERICA. YES, YOU READ THAT RIGHT

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

The science of bass cab design has come a long way since the old back-wrecking 4x12. Back in the day, they were little different to the guitar speaker cabs of the time, just heavier. I think it was the jazz and funk boys with their smiley-face graphic EQs and scary chops who first realised that a smaller, lighter bass speaker could deliver volume and high quality tone if it was well designed and made from quality materials, rather than relying on a chipboard wardrobe with four guitar speakers tacked to the front panel. Fast-forward to today and, as my dad always says, we don't know we're born. There are plenty of boutique bass cabs available now and with the development of neodymium drivers, most are light and compact, if pretty expensive.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

The CN212 cabinet is made from best quality void-free Baltic birch ply, and covered in a woven textured hard tolex, not unlike that used on the old Ampeg combos in the 1960s. Two 12" cast frame neodymium speakers plus the high frequency driver are mounted onto the front baffle, and on the back panel there are two neutrik and two ¼" jack parallel in/outs. Next to these is an attenuator allowing you to adjust the HF unit gain. Although this is a compact cab, and a lightweight one at that, flush-fitting grab handles mounted just above centre on either side make shifting the CN212 safe and easy. The speakers are well protected by the black steel grille, and there are black steel corner protectors and rubber feet underneath. It looks classy and expensive, which of course it is.

SOUNDS

Amplifying and reproducing bass presents a whole range of specific problems, one of which is that it takes a great deal more amp power to reproduce low frequencies than it does to shift high ones. Because of this, the loudspeakers in your bass cabinet need voice coils that can handle the high transient voltages from the amp, and the speaker's cones must be able to cope with the greater 'back and forth' displacement that these higher voltages cause. One solution is to have heavy-duty 15" or 18" speakers, but these have their own inherent problems in that they're slow to respond and lack the frequency range which most modern bassists need.

Now, 12" speakers mean a fast transient attack, and the two high quality custom drivers used here mean that slap sounds immediate and rhythmic, with the presence and articulation you can only get from high quality, efficient speakers. Normal fingerstyle playing reveals that the CN212 has a remarkably flat frequency response too, with the extremely low frequencies reproduced as perfectly as those all-important mids. As a result, the sound is full and natural with no particular frequency highlighted above any other. However you set the EQ on the amp, you'll find that your own bass's natural tone arrives at your ears totally unaffected. It's actually quite unnerving to hear it like this, but with a powerful amp such as the Markbass Tube 800 and a good quality instrument such as the Ken Smith which we used for the test, the sound is pure hi-fi.

There's no shortage of headroom or volume, either. Because of the almost total lack of distortion, the speakers never really sound loud: it's only when you realise that you can't hear the rest of the band that you appreciate just how much volume is being pumped out.

CONCLUSION

Jim Bergantino, like fellow amp-maker Phil Jones, honed his speaker design skills early in his career while building high-end audiophile hi-fi systems. Playing through this Bergantino cab, it's easy to see how that experience has influenced both the sound and the design of this speaker. It's beautifully made, with no apparent compromise to either cost or time.

I've noticed more and more Bergantino cabs on stage recently, and not just behind the jazzers. This 2x12 is plenty powerful enough for most rock backlines, and the quality of the sound is amazing. It's so accurate, and yet with a depth and body that makes you wonder how you ever played through that old 4x12 and thought it was a pretty good bass sound.

The downside? The fact that this cab is four ohms is a bit of a mixed blessing. On the one hand it means that the amp you use with it will be working to its full potential: on the other, you can't really use this as part of a larger system, as adding another cab would lower the impedance to a potentially amp-exploding level. However, as a one-cab solution to almost any situation, the Bergantino CN212 is as good as it gets.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £950
SPEAKERS | 2x12 Custom Neodymium drivers with 7oz magnets, 1" tweeter
CROSSOVER | Phase coherent with tweeter level control
CONNECTIONS | 2 x ¼ jack and 2 x neutrik (parallel)
POWER | 700W RMS
FREQUENCY RESPONSE | 30Hz to 20kHz
IMPEDANCE | 4 ohms
DIMENSIONS | (HxWxD) 790 x 460 x 380mm
WEIGHT | 20kg
COVER | Fitted cover available

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Best quality speakers and materials combine to make perhaps the only bass speaker cab you'll ever need
MINUS | It's quite expensive. Four ohms means it can only really be used on its own
OVERALL | One of the best single bass cabs you can buy. Used with a powerful, good quality bass amp, the CN212 will be perfect for nearly any situation, recording or gigging

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★★★☆☆☆

HARTKE

HD25 And HD50 Combos

DAVE CLARKE HAS A HEART TO HARTKE WITH A NEW RANGE OF HIGHLY PORTABLE COMBOS

Korg UK
www.korguk.com

“PLACING THE COMBOS SIDE BY SIDE, THE HD25 LOOKS TINY COMPARED TO THE HD50, ITSELF STILL REASONABLY SMALL BUT POSSESSING JUST THAT HINT OF BIG-BROTHER COOL”

Rightly or wrongly, combos falling into the category of ‘practice amps’ tend to be used in small rehearsal spaces, intimate live settings for acoustic gigs and, of course, for getting a bit of practice. Needless to say, bassists joined at the hip to bombastic drummers, or treading the boards of larger venues, require more powerful setups. However, amps of this stature are a useful addition to any bass player’s arsenal and are often the entry point for bassists cutting their teeth. As Hartke is one of bass amplification’s big names, I was particularly interested in trying the two smaller models from the US company’s new HD combo series. While the range includes more powerful 75w and 150w models, I got to try out the HD25 and HD50, which as their model numbers suggest are 25w and 50w, respectively. Do they cut it? Let’s have a look...

BUILD QUALITY

The HD combos all come equipped with Hartke’s patented HyDrive aluminium and paper hybrid speakers, attached to a ceramic magnet. The HD25 houses an 8” speaker, while that of the HD50 is 10”. The top-mounted amp panel features volume, bass, mid and treble controls, a ¼” headphone socket and a 1/8” aux input, with the amplifiers protected by a handy built-in limiter. (For the record, apart from the obvious difference in size and power output, the HD75 and HD150’s 12” and 15” speakers are backed up by 2” tweeters, a seven-band EQ and, in the HD150’s case, an XLR direct

output.) Hartke's sleek black and silver aspect, perforated black metal grille and moulded top strap handle make for pretty mean looking pieces of kit, with the lightly pimpled black vinyl covering providing the combos with a neat finishing touch that should provide just enough purchase to stop your phone from vibrating its way onto the floor while you're playing. It's a no frills set-up, but at these price points, it could be argued that you shouldn't expect too many.

SOUND QUALITY

Placing the combos side by side, the HD25 looks tiny compared to the HD50, itself still reasonably small but possessing just that hint of big-brother cool. Sonically, the HD25 delivers an awful lot of punch for its 24.9 pounds. Its robust tone and surprising output was beyond my initial expectations and, after a few minutes, I became aware of my neighbour's estate agent showing a potential buyer around his house. Had the diminutive HD25's relatively big punch just sabotaged a sale? Sure, with the volume cranked up, the 8" speaker was moving like the characters in *Roobarb* (look it up on YouTube, kids!), and it eventually began to distort with the volume set at 8/10, with the bass EQ turned-up to the max (or 'reggae', as I like to call it). For all the many positives, the HD25 still had the slightly hollow sound that you might expect from a combo of its size, and I never quite achieved a tone I was satisfied with. However, should we expect miracles from a tiny combo costing just over £100? Of course not: horses for courses.

Any doubts as to the anti-social qualities of the HD25 were quickly superseded when I plugged into the HD50. The difference between the two

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

HARTKE HD25 AND HD50
PRICE | **HD25** £119.99, **HD50** £203.99
POWER | HD25 25 watts; HD50 50 watts
SPEAKERS | HD25 8" hybrid cone driver; HD50 10" ditto
FEATURES | Volume, bass, mid and treble controls, 1/4-inch input for active/passive bass guitars, 1/8-inch stereo Aux input allows for stereo line level devices (MP3 players, keyboards), 1/4-inch mono headphone output; built-in limiter
DIMENSIONS | HD25 19"x17.5"x13.5"; HD50 20.5"x19.5"x15.5"
WEIGHT | HD25 24.9lb/11.3kg; HD50 30.6lb/13.9kg

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Great tones for this price, useful features
MINUS | HD25 doesn't quite stand out enough
OVERALL | Useful pair of combos, of which the HD50 is easily the best

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	7/10 stars
SOUND QUALITY	8/10 stars
VALUE	9/10 stars

combos is huge, with the superior qualities of the 10" HyDrive speaker blowing its smaller sibling out of the water. I first started playing bass back when Noel Edmonds was still socially acceptable – back then, amps of this size weren't much use beyond your bedroom. Seriously, though, the output of the HD50 is superb, with a warm low end, a tight middle range and the speaker's aluminum section helping to deliver Hartke's trademark crisp attack on the top end. It's all very satisfying and equally impressive. The EQ controls are pleasingly responsive and, in conjunction with the EQ on my bass, I was able to dial in an array of tones to suit the requirements of most genres. The HD50 will comfortably handle a small venue scenario, working on the assumption that John Bonham reincarnate isn't about to make an appearance on drums.

CONCLUSION

We are lucky to be living in an age where the market is doing an amazing job of meeting modern bassists' ever-growing expectations. Hartke have delivered a couple of rock-solid combos at an extremely reasonable price, and both the HD25 and HD50 possess the ability to comfortably handle just about every drop of power placed under their hoods. In my experience, this wasn't always the case, with many smaller combos of yesteryear sounding like brutal flatulence the moment anyone tried to combine volume with (no pun intended) the bottom end. That's not the case here, particularly with the HD50, which, for an extra £80, is head and shoulders above the HD25. Both are compact units, so I see little reason to buy the HD25 unless you are on an extremely tight budget or live in a cupboard: even then you'd still get great value. The real bang for your buck, though, is in the HD50. It's a gem in its class.

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THE WOODSHED

JOEL GRAHAM TRAVELS TO MANCHESTER FOR A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE GREAT BRITISH BASS LOUNGE

THE GREAT BRITISH BASS LOUNGE • LOWERING THE TONE •

Drew Dempster is the owner of the Great British Bass Lounge, formerly known simply as the Manchester Bass Lounge. The GBBL boasts a vast range of basses, making it a must-visit for readers of this magazine. Committed to providing and stocking high-end basses, Drew is a huge fan of British handmade instruments, as he tells us over a couple of cups of his excellent coffee...

I wanted to know where Drew's inspiration for the GBBL and his overall passion for basses came from. "I started playing bass back in the early 1980s: I started out with a punk band in Bradford called New England," he recalls. "I then qualified as an architect and stopped playing for 23 years. On a whim around five years ago, I felt the urge to buy a bass guitar. I found I couldn't stop picking them up for my collection, and ended up buying around 30. Suddenly I realised that I'd acquired enough to open a shop..."

He adds: "I'd been looking for a way to get out of my previous job, and so I thought, why not? This lot could be my stock. I started with pre-owned basses, simply due to the lack of second-hand basses in this part of the world, but shortly afterwards I was approached by Overwater to be a dealer for their basses in the north-west – it just grew from there."

Thanks to Drew's passion for this country's bass makers, the GBBL's current goal is to provide a largely – but not exclusively – British stock of hand-built, high-quality instruments, as in his opinion the workmanship and quality of these basses is up there with the best. In addition, it's a real buzz for Drew to provide newer players with the experience of playing whatever bass they fancy without the pressure of being rushed. "One of the benefits of doing this," he tells us, "is that you get the young kid that comes here with his dad and is looking for an improvement on his first bass. You get the chance to share your knowledge about the various basses in stock, give him the opportunity to play them, and see the reaction." On the other side of the coin, Drew continues: "There are moments when a person with way more experience and knowledge than me comes into the Lounge, and they just want me to shut up so they can play."

Are certain instruments a struggle to part with, I wonder? Drew chuckles and replies, "Yes, one guy came in to buy a particular bass but left with a Warwick Jack Bruce model. I've seen it since and I really regret selling him it now. I still ask the guy for it back."

What are the long-term goals for the Great British Bass Lounge? Drew is asked this question a lot, but he claims that he still can't come up with a perfect answer. "I don't really know where it's going, and that's exciting," he says. "I'm at full capacity for stock in the Lounge, but I do have ideas about extending. I would have to do it right, though. Anyway, doing this at the moment is something I really enjoy. It's more passion-driven than anything else. I don't view it as a job, although it certainly is sometimes when I'm doing 80 hours a week of paperwork. The face-to-face conversations I have about basses are what make me do it."

Info: www.greatbritishbasslounge.com. Tel: 07837 011 889 or 0161 799 9002. Email: drew@greatbritishbasslounge.com

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THE
FRONT LINE

WANT TO MAKE IT AS A PROFESSIONAL BASSIST? LISTEN UP AS BGM'S PROFESSIONAL BASS TEAM REPORTS BACK FROM THE LIVE STAGE

THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Swingin' jazz guru Ruth talks bass gear

I've always made good choices in terms of buying gear, meaning that I never wanted to have lots of basses, amps and pedals just for the sake of it. Of course I've made mistakes, especially when I first started playing the bass: I bought certain pieces of gear because somebody whose playing I admired owned that kind of bass or amp. Later, I often found out that this gear wasn't really for me, or that it didn't suit my playing. That is also a normal development for any musician. For example, I remember buying this five-string bass when I had just started playing. I could hardly play a simple walking bass-line, but I was really into Latin music at the time and, as lots of Latin bassists play five-strings, I thought I really needed one. Soon I found out how much the extra string confused me, and I realised that I'd jumped ahead too far too soon: I sold that bass a few months later. Nowadays I hear a sound first and then look for the gear I need to recreate that sound. It is important to find exactly what you need, and it's always a pleasure to realise that you need something new, because that means you have developed as a player and that you can hear yourself in a different sonic context. It usually takes me a long time to buy something new, though: I am aware of acquiring gear that I don't need. On top of that, I like to limit myself in some ways as this helps me focus more on what I have, and to get into the gear in a deeper way. This is true for many aspects in my life. I'm not good with too much information or too many possibilities: it confuses me. Having said that, the electric bass that I play most and love best came to me, rather than the other way round. I instinctively bought it many years ago when I was looking for something that suited me physically, rather than sonically. It felt right to me, but I discovered its potential in sound much later. I think it made me play in a certain way as much as the other way round. So maybe it's a fine balance between awareness and instinct. Isn't everything?

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

THE METALHEAD

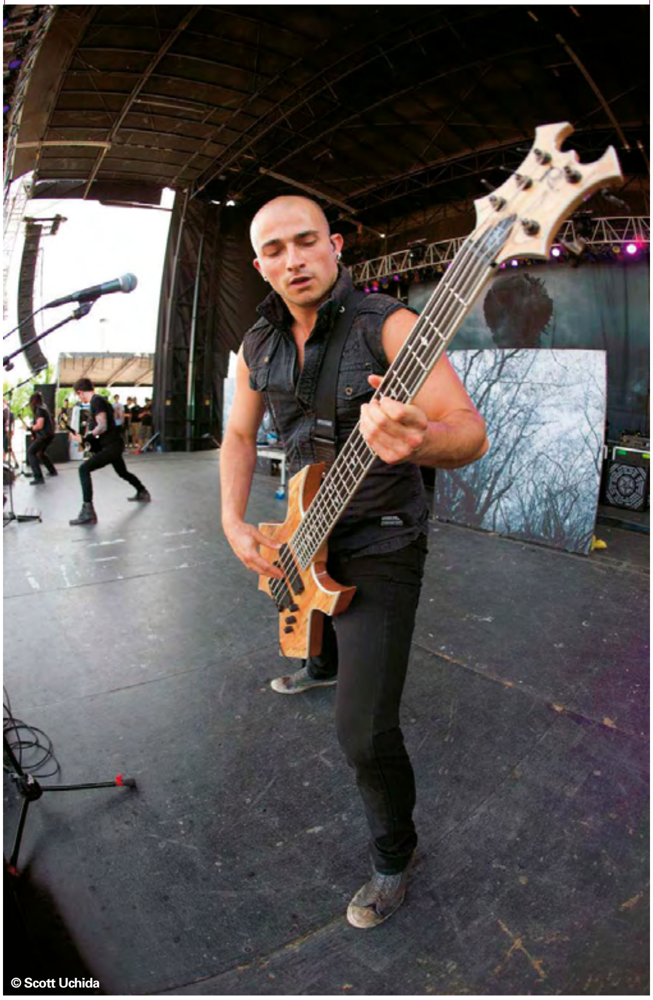
PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium's bassist explores the idea of motivation

On a major tour this summer, our set began at 6:25pm daily. Our challenge every day was to win the early crowd, so the set had to be perfect and the show had to be entertaining with a bare minimum of production. We had no choice but to win those fans over, so we went on stage with the level of enthusiasm that a band playing their first tour would have, whether or not Joe America was sitting down and eating a hot dog while we played for 30 minutes. This was now the deep end of the pool for us, with no escape back to guaranteed moshpits and crowd participation if the audience is in a parking lot and it's up close and personal.

So how did we do? Well, I do think that we are gaining the ground we needed to, but the landscape over here in the USA has changed and so has the course we have had to take in order to keep ascending. FM radio may have shrunk, but its importance in breaking a band is still key. Those people showing up late to catch the headline acts might only be seeing half our set or less, so we made a point of keeping the key tracks, such as the new single or the definite crowd pleasers, towards the end of the set. The trend in our album sales are up, our streaming spins are increasing and all in all, we feel we are making that connection. I always find inspiration in my favourite bands like Iron Maiden and Metallica: they both continued when the times changed around them. I think, as a band, that's all you can do. You either push through when things seem harder, or relent and let another band have a go at it.

www.trivium.org



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THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike expands our role

We bassists are too modest sometimes: I reckon we all have a few more hidden musical talents than we'd readily admit. While I'm all about dedication to the art of bass, it's my experience that everyone benefits from a bit of multi-tasking to make the most of your talents. If your band is active and out doing shows then it's always better for the band to have on board musicians who have a variety of abilities and can use them to benefit the overall musical output. So if you're not the main songwriter, get involved in the arrangements: even something as simple as working through the tempos with the drummer will make a huge difference to the feel and ultimately the success of the songs. Make yourself indispensable: be the sampler person, program the loops, get involved on the backing vocals or even try a bit of additional percussion. These days, a gig isn't just standing at the back, studiously playing the bass: it's also about getting the biggest and best sound out of all the tools and talent available in the band. Obviously, recognise others' abilities and don't be scared to delegate. If your singer has a great ear for harmonies, get them to map them out for you and learn the parts yourself. If your drummer has a great singing voice, get them to sing backing vocals, or see if they want to help with triggering samples or running intro sequences. When songs have more complicated parts or layers, see if you can cover them on the bass – sometimes you can work out a composite bass-line that covers what a rhythm guitar or keyboard would be doing. Think about the overall performance at live shows: if the guitarist is tuning up and the singer is out of breath, be ready to chat to the room and introduce the next song. Remember, it's a band: collaboration and teamwork will take you far.

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Stew gets into the alternate tunings zone. Focus, baby!

As musicians and artists, we have been given the amazing gift of imagination. I have been doing what I do long enough that it's been my incredible good fortune to meet many of my heroes and even to become friends with some of them. There is a part of me that will always be a teenage boy about this. I thought it might be interesting for you all to read the words of some of my favourite players: those whose example has inspired me to push forward with what I do, which in this case means giving you food for thought.

One of the things I have sought to do again and again in this column is to get you to look at what it is you do, but also why you do it and why you want to do it. If you had the chance to sit down with your favourite artists, what might you ask? Think about this in preparation for my next column, for which I sent the same few questions to bassists who share a passion for music but choose to express it in different ways. The first two players were the first bassists I saw using six-string basses in a live setting, each striving for something different and each a cornerstone in my musical world. At the time I saw them using these instruments there were probably fewer than two dozen players worldwide using them. For a young player trying to figure out what I wanted to do, other than play, I owe these two a debt I will never be able to repay. So it will be an honour for me to share their thoughts with you.

Because the players approached are all busy individuals in terms of their art and in their lives, I left the questions few and broad enough that the answers could be covered quickly or in greater depth. The first bassists up are Roberto Vally – who jumped from playing bars in Key West, Florida – to recording and touring the world with Spyro Gyra, and the improv legend Steuart Liebig. These may not be familiar names to you, but if you've read my column they have had an impact on you already. See you next month.

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BASS TECHNIQUES

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

Ellen O'Reilly is a freelance bassist and vocalist currently studying at ICMP. Ellen has extensive experience in gigging, studio and television work.
www.lowendlady.com

ELLEN O'REILLY BEGINNER'S THEORY 63

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES 66

Stuart Clayton has toured the world with legendary ELP drummer Carl Palmer, authored over 20 bass guitar tuition books and has written for *BGM* since its first issue. He is also Head of Bass at BIMM Bristol and is the Bass Technical Consultant for Rockschool.

STUART CLAYTON INTERMEDIATE THEORY 68

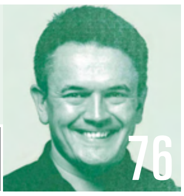
Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES 70

Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com

FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY 74

Say hello to advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...



PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES 76

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS 78

Mike has written for *BGM* since 2004 and has been a bassist since 1987, clocking up over 3000 gigs around the world in the process. He has played for and worked with the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Toyah Willcox, and has a bass collection to rival a small shop.

MIKE BROOKS COVER BAND PRO 80

Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist, with 15 years of touring and 36 solo and collaborative albums to his name. He also lectures at colleges around the world.
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STEVE LAWSON EFFECTS MAESTRO 81

APP EXTRA

ELLEN O'REILLY

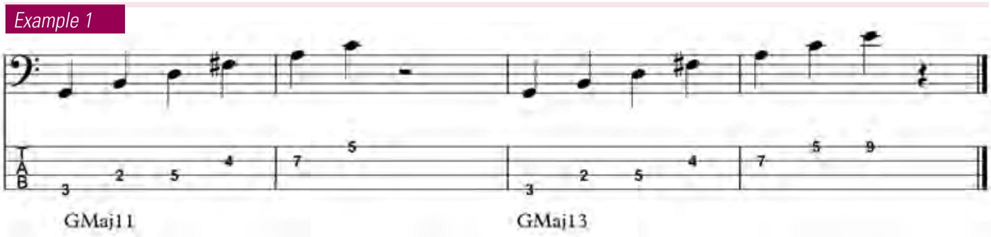
ELLEN FINISHES UP HER EXPLORATION OF CHORD EXTENSIONS FOR BEGINNERS

Hello again low enders! Last month we went on from looking at the 9th extension, which is the 2nd note in the scale from which the chord in question is derived. Once the 2nd, 4th and 6th notes of a scale are played above the octave, then they become known as extensions. As per last month's column, notes within the octave are known as simple intervals and those above the octave are known as compound intervals. Got that? Good!

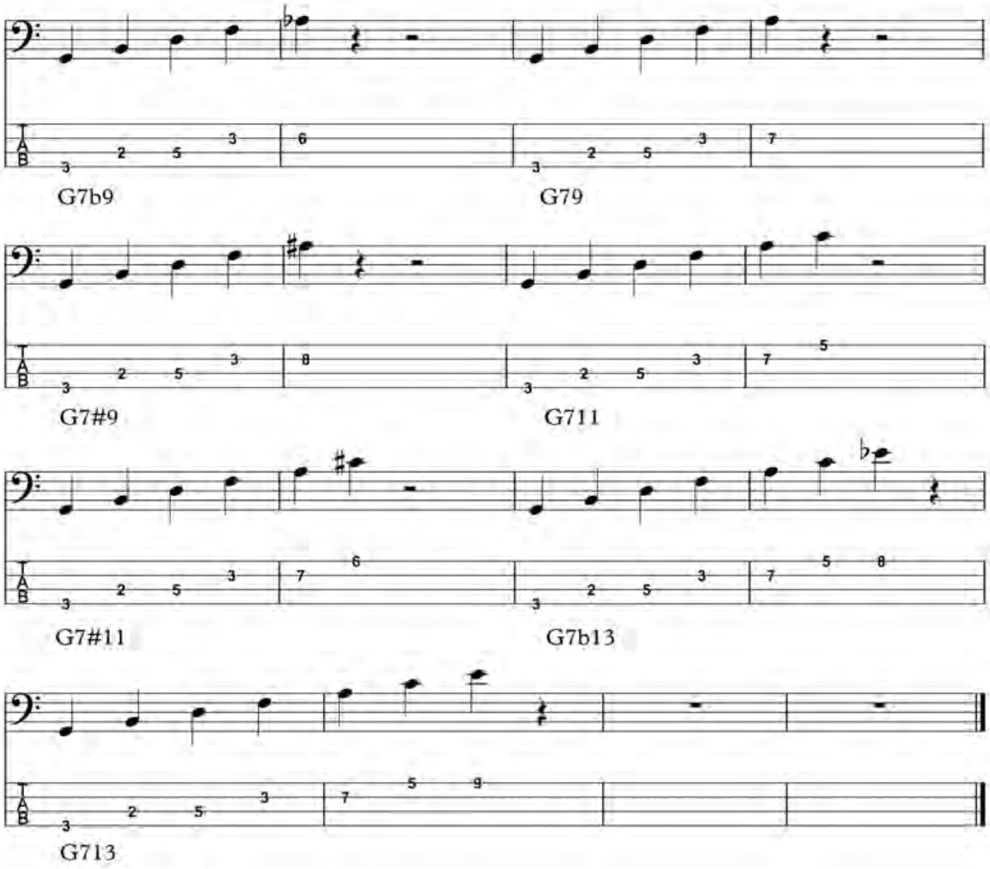
In this column we will complete our discovery of chord extensions by taking a look at the 11th and 13th. As we mentioned before, these are simply the 4th and 6th played up the octave. The 4th becomes the 11th and the 6th becomes the 13th: see **Example 1**.

Extensions are commonly seen as chords: this is a way of providing more information about the notes which you have the option to highlight. Chords are built up as follows: C Maj, C Maj 7, C Maj 9, C Maj 11, C Maj 13.

Example 1



Example 2



You may have seen different chords written out in this manner. All this means is that whoever is holding down the harmonic information in the band – often the guitarist or keyboard player – is playing the basic chord as well as the given extensions. This doesn't always mean that we bass players need to play all these extra notes, it just means that we can if we wish. Most of the time, the other musicians in the band are happy for us to stay around the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th area, but if someone plays a chord with extensions then we do have the opportunity to highlight these tones if we so choose. This all must be done in the right context and feel, of course: in punk rock, using extensions might not work so well. In jazz, on the other hand, chord extensions are common.

The 9th, 11th and 13th extensions can be altered in the following ways: b 9th (b2), 9th (2), #9th (#2), 11th (4), #11th (#4), b13th (b6), 13th (6). See **Example 2** for more on this. When building chords, some of these extensions may be written together as CMaj9#11. This just means that you can play the root, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and #11, in other words C E G B D F#. Have a look at some chord charts and see if you can figure out which note each of the chord symbols are telling you to play. See you next month!

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PAUL GEARY

OUR MAN GEARY KEEPS A-PEDALLING!

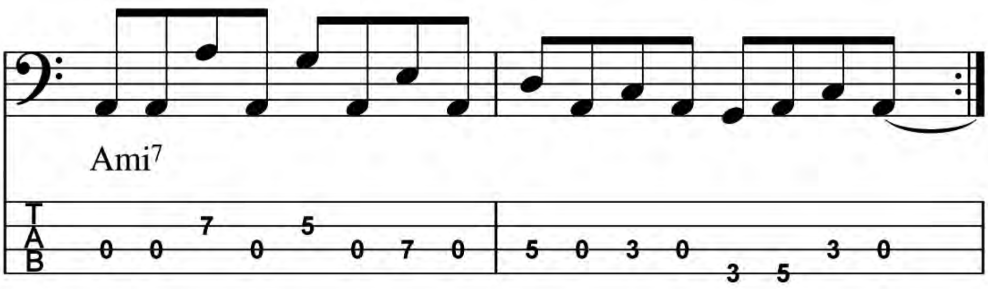
This month I would like to continue with pedal ideas and recap the initial exercises from last month. Make sure your fingers are warmed up and your picking hand fingers are alternating first and second fingers. It is really important that you alternate picking to get even tone and consistency of groove. Watch out for tempo, too: don't be tempted to play the exercises too quickly, especially **Example 3**. Music isn't necessarily instant: it takes time to build up dexterity, motor skills and muscle memory. If you play something fast but wrong, you have already programmed your brain to make errors. When you practise, do it at a tempo that you are comfortable with.

EXAMPLES 1 AND 2

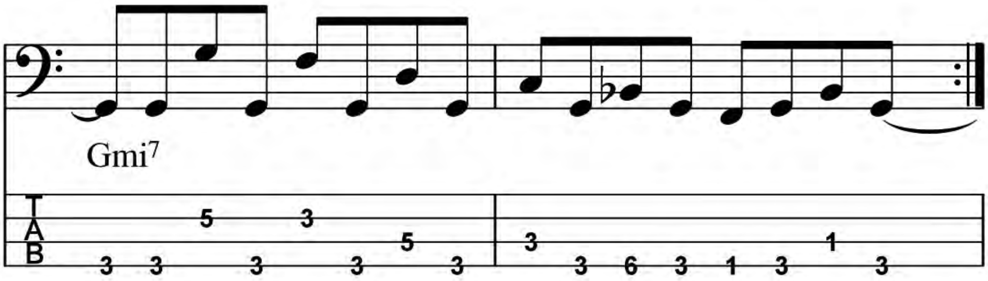
The first interval which we play is an octave up from the open A string (high A, seventh fret D string) followed by a minor 7th interval on G (fifth fret D string), a perfect 5th on E (seventh fret A string), a perfect 4th on D (fifth fret A string) followed by a minor 3rd on low C played on the third fret of the A string. The object is to always pedal back to the low A.

At the end of **Example 1** we move straight onto **Example 2**. Let's pick up the low G (third fret E string). The main challenge is to play the pedal groove in a closed position without open strings. It is always good practice not to rely too heavily on open strings. The moment we are faced with playing any bass-line in a different key, starting on a different root note isn't as big an issue as if you have learned it in a closed position. As above, let your ear always be the final judge, and most importantly let the genre govern the actual line. The bass-line then repeats the exact same intervals as in **Example 1**.

Example 1



Example 2



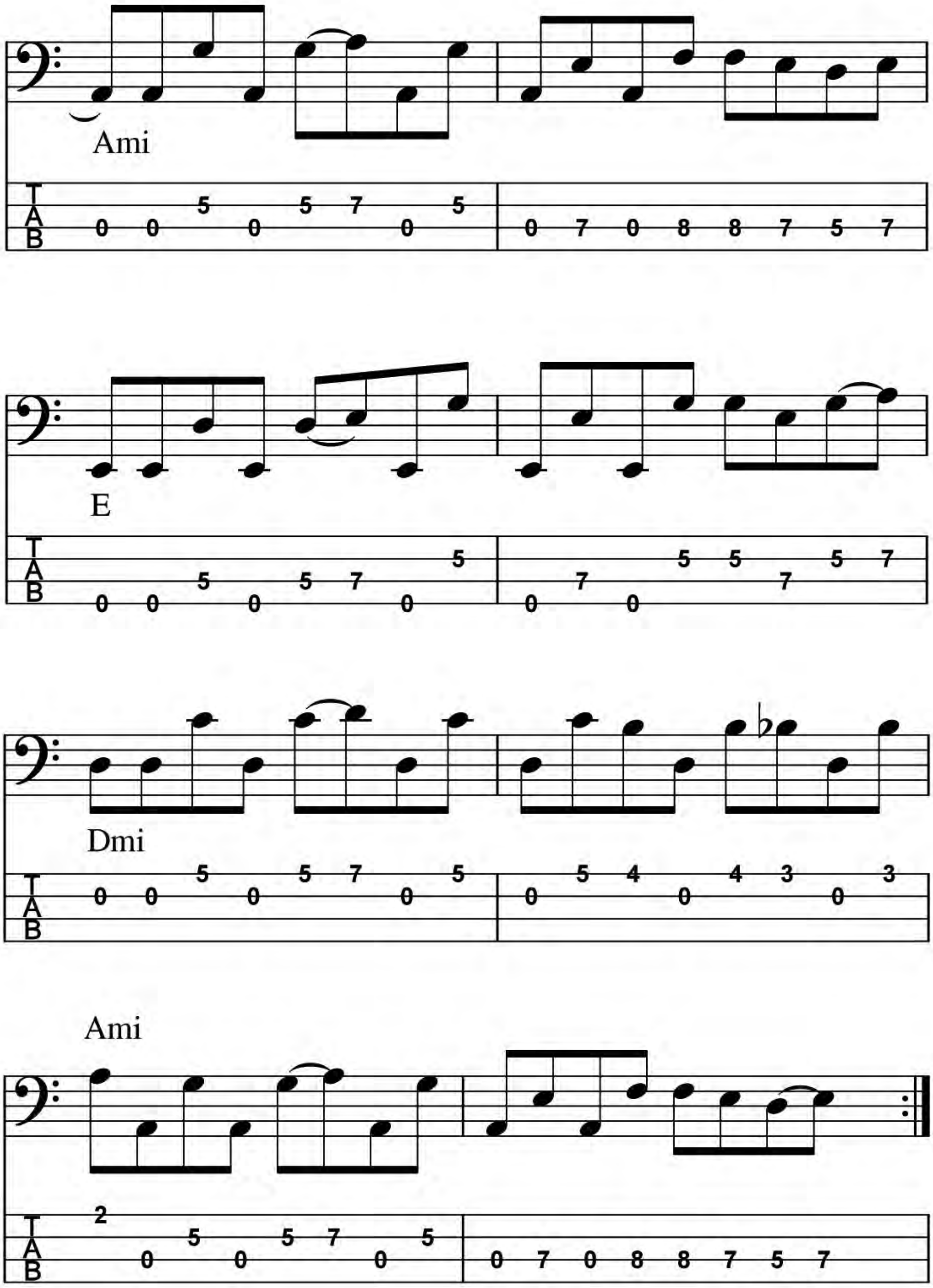
EXAMPLE 3

The final example is similar to a track by Muse called 'Hysteria'. The bass-line starts on an A minor chord using some of the same intervals from the last two examples, the first being a minor 7th from the open A string, played on G (fifth fret D string) After pedalling back on to the open A, watch out for the hammer-on from G to high A (seventh fret D string), indicated with a tie within the bar. This is a feature of the line that occurs throughout the whole example.

The riff then outlines the E, D minor and A minor chords before the repeat. Play one bar at a time, repeated if necessary. The most important thing is to get the line flowing without errors. Each chord change indicates the root note that needs to be pedalled, this note in turn is played throughout the bar skipping between the various intervals.

Until next time, enjoy!

Example 3



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STUART CLAYTON

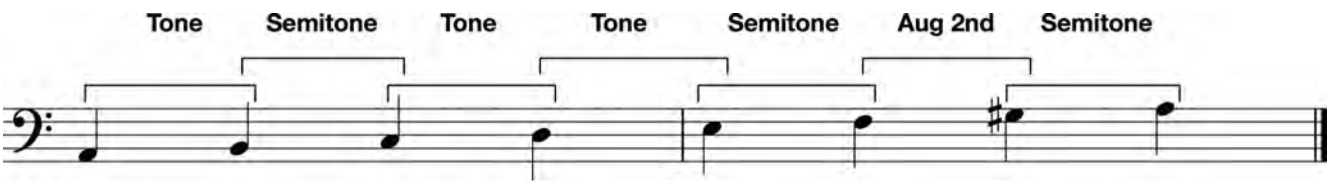
GUEST COLUMNIST STUART CLAYTON EXAMINES THE PHRYGIAN DOMINANT MODE

Hello, and welcome to my guest column! I'm sitting in for Alex Webster this month and thought I would take the opportunity to build on last month's column on exotic scales. This month we'll take a look at the Phrygian Dominant mode, which can be built from the harmonic minor scale.

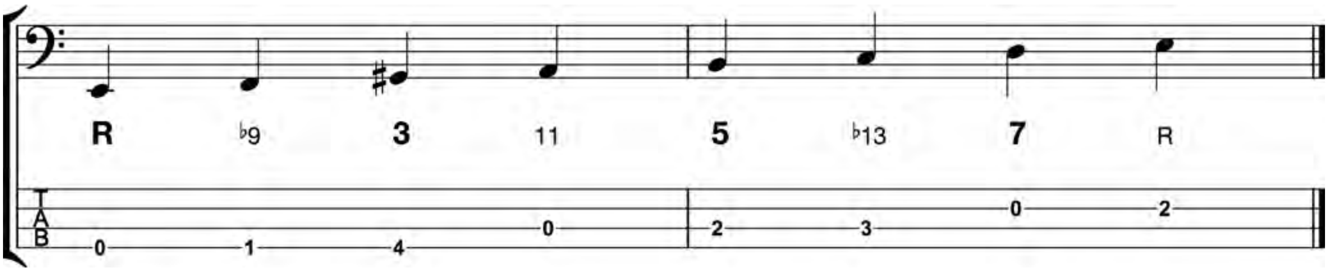
The harmonic minor scale was covered last issue, and you'll no doubt have discovered it's a scale with a rather unusual and unique sound. This is due to the augmented 2nd interval (essentially a minor 3rd) between the 6th and 7th degrees of the scale. This wide interval gives the scale an unusual quality that makes it a great choice for those moments when you want to veer away from more conventional minor sounds. The construction of this mode is therefore: tone, semitone, tone, tone, semitone, augmented second, semitone. This is shown in **Example 1**.

As with any scale, there are a series of modes that can be played off of the harmonic minor scale and I thought it might be fun to cover one of them here. The mode in question is known as the Phrygian Dominant and is built from the 5th degree

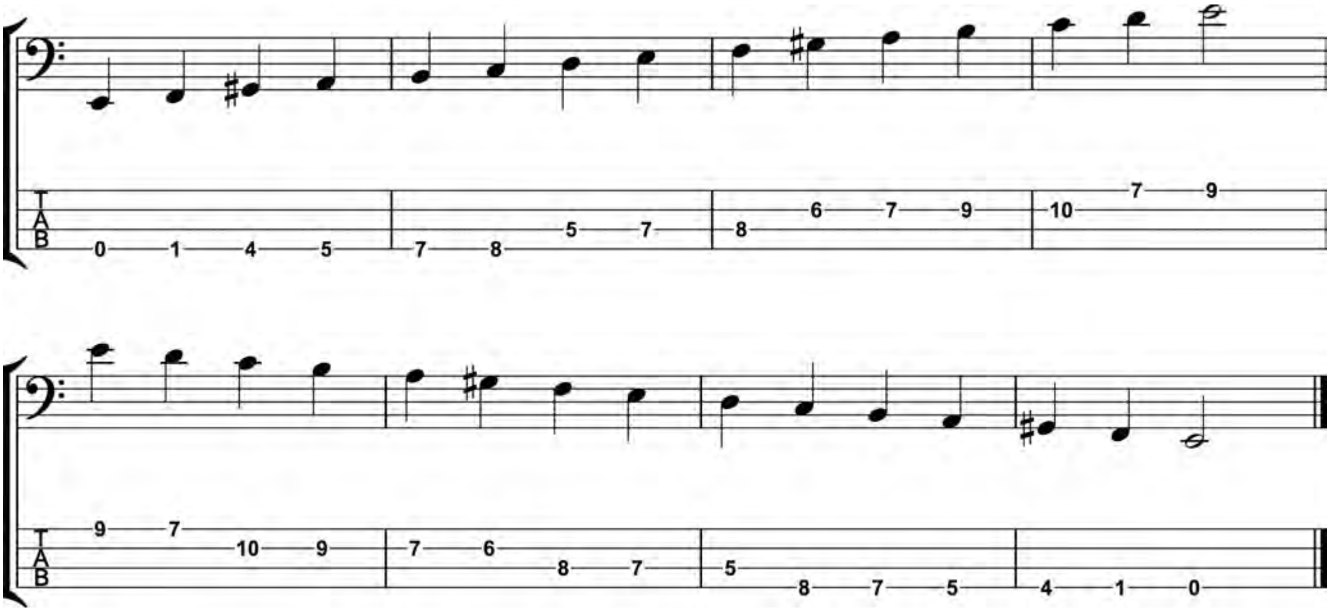
Example 1 The A Harmonic Minor Scale



Example 2 The E Phrygian Dominant Mode



Example 3 The E Phrygian Dominant Mode (2 Octaves)



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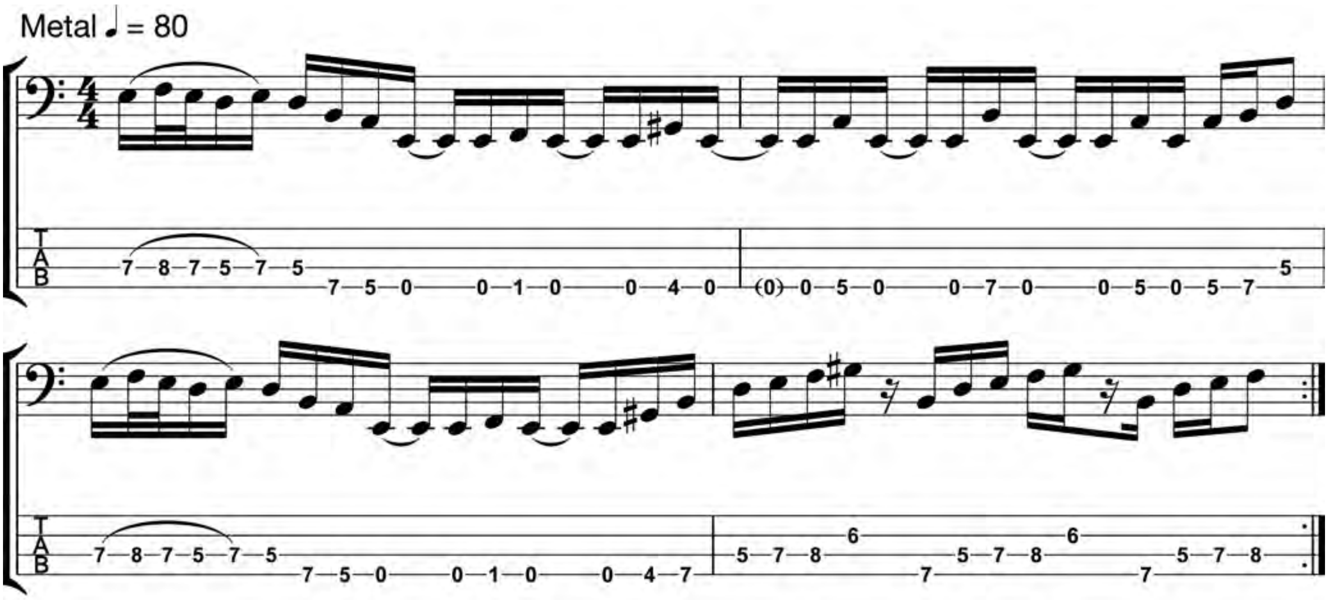
Example 4 E Phrygian Dominant Bass-line

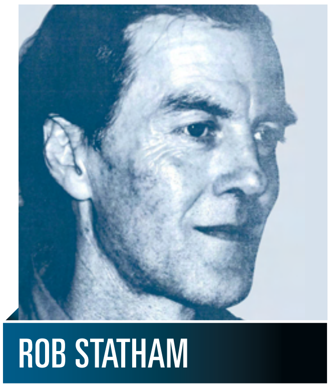


of the harmonic minor scale. In the case of an A harmonic minor scale, this means that we'll building the mode from E (**Example 2**).

As you can see from **Example 2**, this mode contains all four of the main chord tones for an E dominant chord: the root (E), major 3rd (G#), 5th (B) and minor 7th (D). All of the other notes are possible extensions to that chord: the F is a flattened 9th, the A an 11th and the C is a flattened 13th. It's the flattened 9th that really characterises this mode however and gives it the Phrygian element. You'll hear this clearly when you play through the mode. **Example 3** shows a good fingering for the mode over two octaves.

When you play through this mode you'll hear that it can sound quite menacing! This makes it a popular choice for a lot of rock/metal/prog groups. In order to allow you hear the mode in action, **Example 4** is a rock/metal bassline that puts it to use.

Be sure to practise this mode all over the fingerboard and in other keys as well in order to really get the most from it. I hope you've enjoyed this month's instalment. If you have any questions about the information presented here, you can drop me an email at stuart@stuartclayton.com.



ROB STATHAM

ROB STATHAM EXPLORES NEW WAYS OF ENSURING THAT YOUR FINGERS HIT THE RIGHT FRETS

We have previously looked at different fretting-hand fingering systems, and it will be useful to demonstrate how these can help provide us with various alternatives when we're looking for the right fingering for a particular line. The number of possible fingerings in any given situation is often far more extensive than it might at first seem, and while often the first fingering we find is perfectly fine, I'm sure you've all had the experience of playing a bass-line with a particular method and then, perhaps years later, discovering a better way to do it.

Firstly, a quick recap on the four fingering systems I referred to previously:

1 One finger per fret – our default system
2 Double bass fingering – the way we would normally play an octave, but with the fourth finger making the octave, not the third, as one finger per fret might suggest
3 Five-fret fingering – where we cover a five-fret span, with a tone rather than semitone between our first and second finger providing the extra fret spacing
4 Extended fingering – for example, playing a one-octave major scale on two strings, four notes per string, using each finger in turn on each string, thus making a series of short shifts

These different fingerings can then be combined in any number of possible ways when considering a fingering for any particular bass-line, generating many possibilities. Take, for instance, the major scale, as familiar a structure as any. Doubtless you're all well aware of the standard fingering for this, but I can suggest four basic options to begin with, as shown in **Example 1**. Obviously the notation is the same for each bar, so the action is all in the tab here, illustrating the fingering options.

In the first bar I use what I would term a backward shape, thinking of the octave note as three strings up and three frets back, rather than a forward octave shape of two strings up and two frets up, the most common way of thinking of an octave. Here I'm starting on the fourth finger and using one finger per fret, but it is necessary to make a semitone position adjustment for the last two notes. The second bar is our familiar one-finger-per-fret standard pattern, starting on our second finger.

Bar three is an example of the five fret system, starting with the first finger, but note that the last two notes need to revert to one finger per fret, our first finger just moving up one fret to play the 7th note of the scale. Our fretting hand is then well placed to continue up to the 5th above the octave if we so wish. Finally, the fourth bar is an example of extended fingering, the scale played just across two strings, using each fretting hand finger in turn on each string and making a series of short position adjustments as we go.

Beyond this, we could create even more options by combining these different fingerings: for instance, playing the first four notes as **Example 4** (all on one string), and then adopting a five-fret span from the 5th, the note G at the tenth fret on the A string, using our first finger. This opens up the scale all the way to the 6th above the octave, and all with minimal position adjustments.

I've demonstrated this in **Example 2**, as well as a bass-line that might be played using this fingering pattern. The first two bars illustrate the C major scale from the first finger at the eighth fret on the E string, all the way up to the 6th above the octave, at the fourteenth fret on the G string. You will see that once we have made our first four notes requiring a little position adjustment, which is not too much of a stretch starting this high up the neck, then using a five fret pattern, we have a clear run to the top A. The second two bars in this example demonstrate a bass-line in C major using this pattern, the fretting hand

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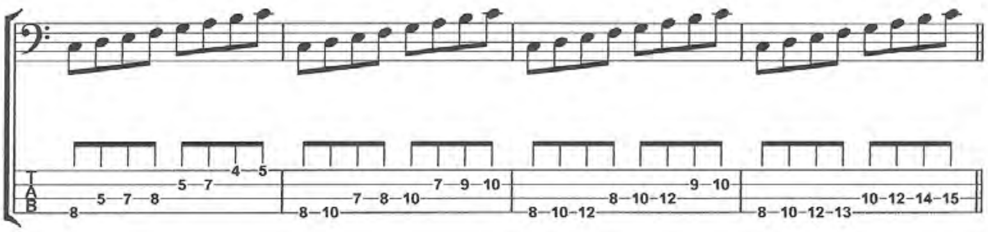
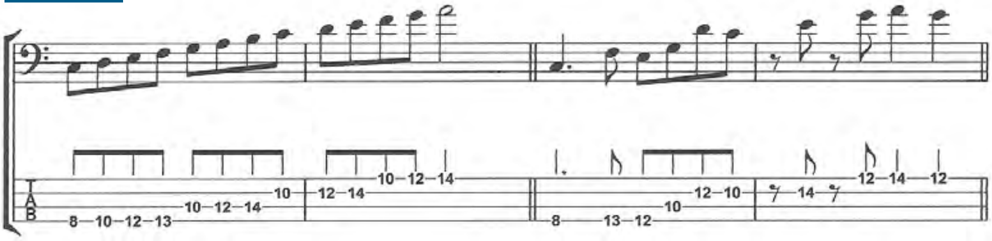
fingers covering the pattern outlined in the first two bars, though some notes are omitted.

It's instructive to consider playing this last bass-line example with a backward shape for C major in the first bar. This requires a large position adjustment for the second bar, which illustrates a point to consider when coming up with fingerings. That is, that the best fingering for any given line, scale fragment or arpeggio is not always the same one – it depends on where we start from, contingent on what we played previously, and where we want to get to in order to play whatever comes next most comfortably. It is for this reason that it's a good habit to consider different fingers. Don't just follow the tab without thinking how it might be different, because it always can be different. **Examples 3 and 4** are illustrative of alternate fingerings for bass-lines, any one of which might be best to use depending on context

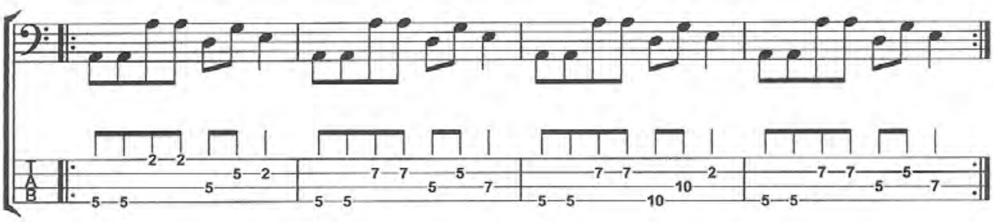
Example 1



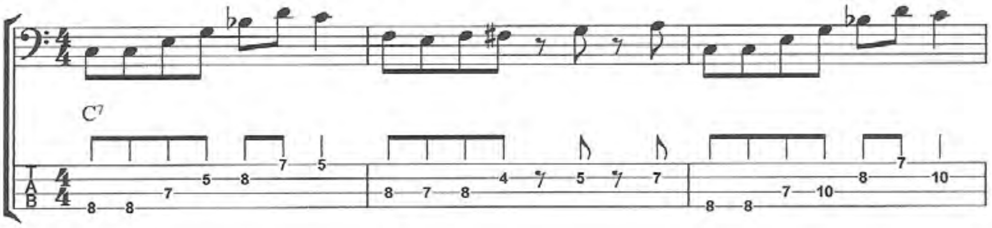
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 3 is a bass-line of one bar based on a dominant 7th/minor 7th tonality – there's no 3rd in the line, so it could work for either. I've made a four-bar pattern out of the idea using three different fingerings. The first bar, starting on the first finger, is a backward octave shape using one finger per fret fingering; the second bar uses a forward octave shape using double bass fingering; and the third bar requires a shift in position, ending up in a one-finger-per-fret shape on the lower two strings between the seventh and tenth fret.

The fourth bar is a repeat of the fingering in the second bar, so it might be a good idea to cycle these four bars round a few times, making each different fingering smooth, aiming for them to all sound the same. Notice that the first fingering would work if the next part you were required to play took you into a lower register; the second fingering is good if you're remaining in the same part of the neck; and the third fingering might be useful if you needed to next play something in the higher register. So although the second bar is probably the most comfortable fingering, it's not necessarily the best one: it depends on what follows.

Example 4 is a two-bar pattern on a C7 chord, again demonstrating three possible fingerings: firstly, a backward octave pattern, using one finger per fret; secondly, a forward octave pattern, using one finger per fret; and lastly, starting with a five-fret span and shifting to one finger per fret between the tenth and thirteenth frets. The slight added complication to this line is the chromaticism, the note F#, requiring a one-fret adjustment in both **Examples 1 and 3**. But again, you can see that while the second fingering is the most obvious, the first would work well if we were next required to play in the lower register, and the third would be the better option if the next part were in the higher register.

Finding the best fingering for anything we have to play can make all the difference, so it's important to be aware of our options. Practising and making use of these different fingering systems, and looking to be exhaustive in our approach when deriving different fingering possibilities for any given line is a good habit to get into. You'll be surprised at just how many ways there are to play the same idea.

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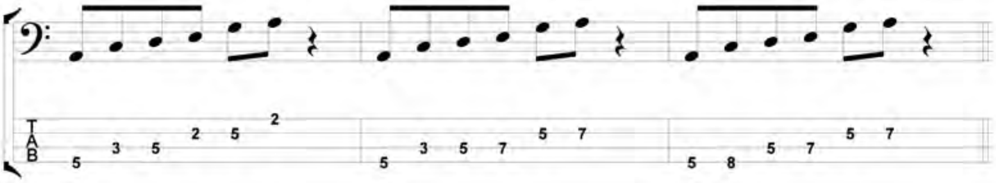
FRANC O'SHEA

AFTER YEARS OF ADVANCED JAZZ THEORY, IT'S TIME FOR FRANC TO LET HIS HAIR DOWN AND ROCK!

Example 1



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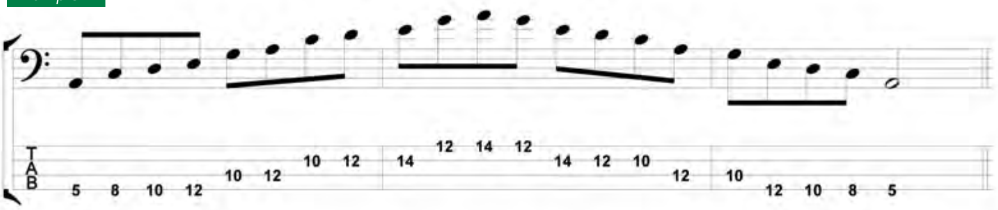

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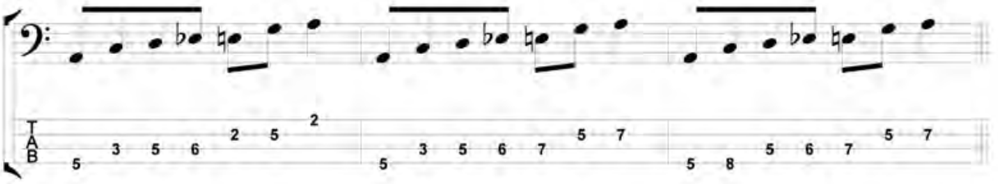

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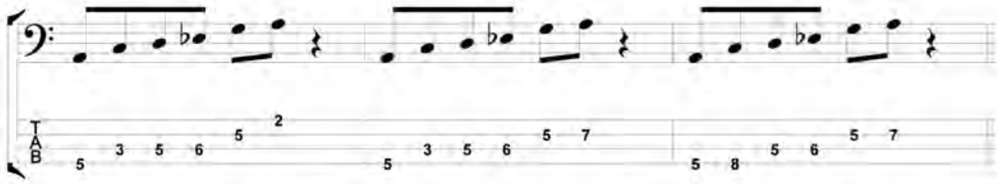

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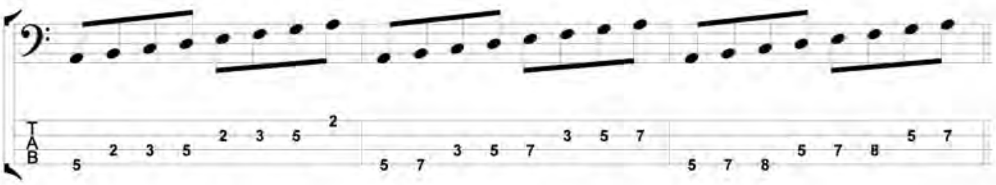

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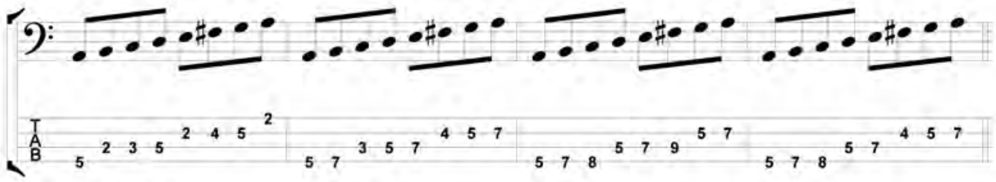


In this month's column I will be looking at some of the more common scale choices that are used in rock bass solos. Rock bass solos are not so common as they are in jazz, but when they do occur they tend to have certain stylistic traits, and this is what I will be exploring in my next couple of columns.

Over the years, rock music has developed and expanded to include many subgenres since it grew out of the rock'n'roll music that had its heyday in the 1950s. It has been said that the British Invasion took the 'roll' out of rock'n'roll as groups such as the Beatles and the Who dropped the swing rhythmic feel that rock'n'roll had inherited from jazz and blues in favour of straight 8th notes. Although rock'n'roll paved the way for the emerging post-war youth culture, it was rock that took youth music to the extreme, with its rebellion towards the establishment and open musical form that allowed it to blend with any other type of music.

Few groups better typified the unleashing of raw adolescent energy than the Who when 'My Generation' was released in 1965. For bassists, what made it even more compelling was the inclusion of a bass solo, or more correctly several bass breaks. When bass is featured in rock music it can usually be placed into one of three general categories: the bass break, the out-and-out bass solo, and the involved bass-line. Sometimes the lines drawn between these categories can be blurred. In 'My Generation', John Entwistle's bass breaks have a feeling of urgency to them and are executed confidently and cleanly. His use of the minor pentatonic scale would become typical of the rock genre, and his fast broken triplet

Extending your tone life

descending runs still thrill listeners to this day.

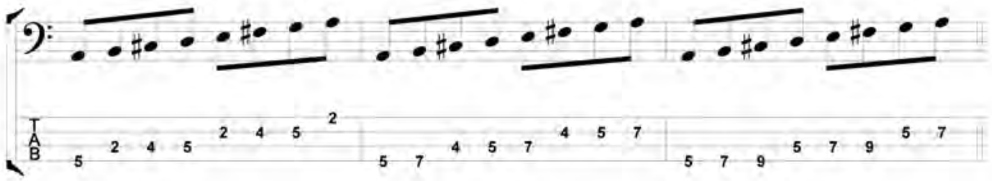
A rather different bass icon in the rock world is Geddy Lee from Rush. His breaks on their ultimate rock instrumental, 'YYZ', have inspired many a bassist. In this section the tune alternates between two rock power chords, B5 and C5, creating an almost flamenco-sounding progression. The breaks occur on the C5 chord: Geddy uses a mixture of scales including the major pentatonic, the major scale and on the final break, a C Lydian mode, which hints at the aforesaid flamenco nature of the sequence. He tops the final break off tastefully by employing some stacked 4th harmonic chords. After a huge drum fill, Alex Lifeson's guitar solo continues the Moorish flavour by using Phrygian and Phrygian dominant modes.

Matt Freeman of the American punk band Rancid plays a short but impressive bass break or solo on the tune 'Maxwell Murder'. Using a D minor pentatonic scale he makes good use of the open D string, combining it with high fretted notes from both the D and G strings. When playing live, Rancid would sometimes use this tune to create an extended bass workout where Matt would stretch out even further.

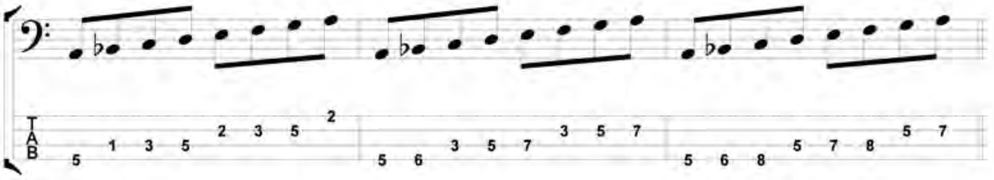
Actual bass solos are usually fairly short affairs in rock music, especially when they appear in recorded form. When they are longer, they often appear as an introduction to a tune, such as Black Sabbath's 'N.I.B.' where Geezer Butler's bubbling, effects-driven bass sets the scene admirably before the band kicks in.

The late Cliff Burton's solo with Metallica on '(Anesthesia) Pulling Teeth' is a different beast altogether. Clocking in at over four minutes, Burton's overdriven bass takes the listener on a heavy metal odyssey. He starts by shifting between various minor and major arpeggios in the key of D minor and later suggests both the Aeolian and Dorian modes by employing minor and major 6th intervals. He also arpeggiates some rock power chords, and sometimes uses the flattened fifth or 'devil's note' interval of the key. He uses many devices such as trills, hammer-ons, pull-offs, bends, riffs, harmonics, minor pentatonic runs and chromaticism to get the message across, locking in with the drums that kick in halfway through.

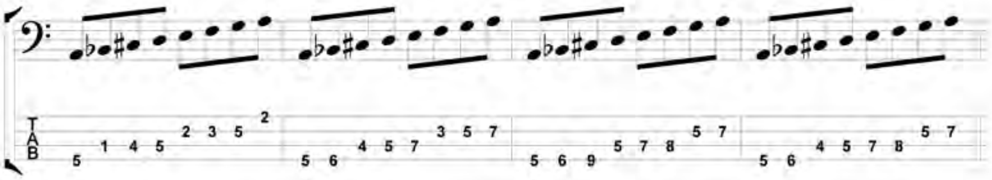
Example 7



Example 8



Example 9



A good example of an actual bass solo within a tune is Jaco Pastorius's work with Mott The Hoople's Ian Hunter. Jaco played on Hunter's 'All American Alien Boy' and was given a solo on the title track. Apparently he didn't want to take the solo, however, as he thought it might be inappropriate in such a setting. However, Hunter insisted that he should – and we now have Jaco playing two choruses on this classic rock blues, flawlessly executing many of his trademark motifs with a tasteful sprinkling of chromatics and jazzy blues ideas.

There is often a fine line between soloing and common-or-garden complicated bass playing, as John Paul Jones demonstrates on Led Zeppelin's 'Lemon Song'. After the guitar solo, the band brings the dynamic level down and Jones's improvised bass can be heard weaving its way through an E7 rock blues, grabbing a fistful of chromatics, minor pentatonic scales, major and minor thirds. He even includes traces of the Dorian mode.

Full-on solo bass playing can be heard in many tunes: a particularly striking example is Jean Jacques Burnel's playing on the Stranglers tune 'Genetix' from their album Raven. The ideas are executed forcefully, with his legendary biting tone featured at 3'50" into the track. There are many more rock bassists whose work is worth exploring, such as Jack Bruce, Paul McCartney, John Myung, Les Claypool, Billy Sheehan and Stu Hamm, many of whom you regularly see in these pages – but hopefully the tracks I have mentioned here will give you a taster of where to find some great rock solos.

For my examples this month I have presented the more common scales used in rock using an A root. Keys that are related to the open strings tend to be more popular in rock, although other keys are used too, of course.

Example 1 shows three ways you can play the A minor pentatonic scale with your left hand. **Example 2** extends the same scale over two octaves. **Example 3** demonstrates that you can easily turn a minor pentatonic scale into a minor blues scale, by simply adding the flattened fifth to it. **Example 4** is a favourite of mine: it sounds darker than the minor blues, as it uses exactly the same formula but doesn't include the perfect fifth, which gives the dissonant b5 more prominence.

The tab of **Example 5** shows three left-hand shapes for the Aeolian mode and while **Example 6** does the same with the Dorian mode, an extra bar is included to demonstrate another popular Dorian fingering, which is a confluence of two shapes. **Example 7** demonstrates different ways to play a Mixolydian mode, a mode that works particularly well with dominant 7th chords. Finally we come to the Phrygian and Phrygian dominant modes in **Example 8** and **Example 9**. These two modes give a darker sound that is sometimes used in metal.

In next month's column I will be looking at ways that these scales can be applied when creating rock solos. Until then…

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PHIL MANN

IT'S TIME TO GET THOSE FINGERS IN SHAPE, DECLARES TECHNIQUE MAESTRO MANN

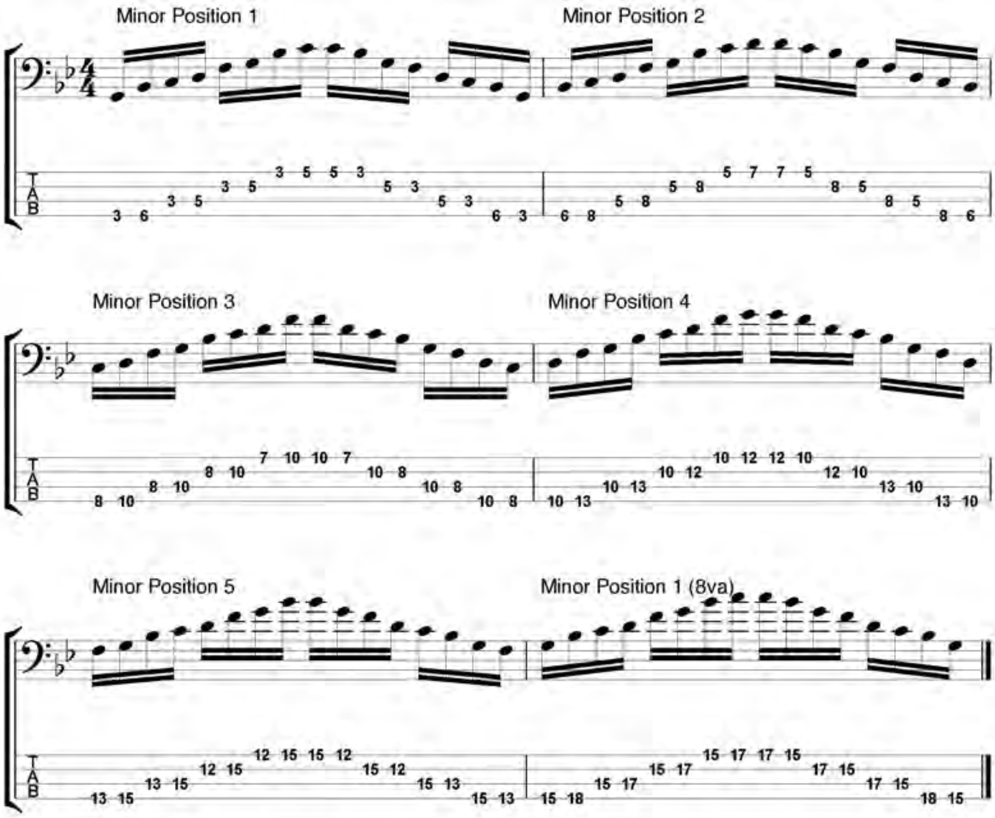
I'm freshly back from the Players School of Music in Florida – but it's time to forget about the sunshine, return to the smog of London, and continue some focused study on our anhemitonic friends: pentatonic scales.

Last month we took our first pigeon steps into the field of cross-handed tapping, investigating a couple of possibilities and most importantly, taking some time to become acquainted with the entirety of the major pentatonic. If you recall, our subject matter comes in two primary forms: 'hemitonic', which are those containing one or more semi-tones and 'anhemitonic', which are the ones that most of us are more familiar with, that contain none. The last issue was exclusively focused on major pentatonics; this time out, it's time to investigate minor.

'Left and right', 'up and down', 'meat and potatoes' – a lot of things come in pairs and 'major and minor' are no different. There's a relationship that exists between the pair that links all of their diatonic information: perhaps you've come across the phrase 'relative minor' in prior studies? Well, when you play the tonic of a major pentatonic, move down a minor third and you'll find the tonic of the 'relative' minor scale – this distance of a minor 3rd (three frets) is the key. Because of this relationship, recalling the minor pentatonic patterns is quite straightforward as they're the same as the major, just in a different order.

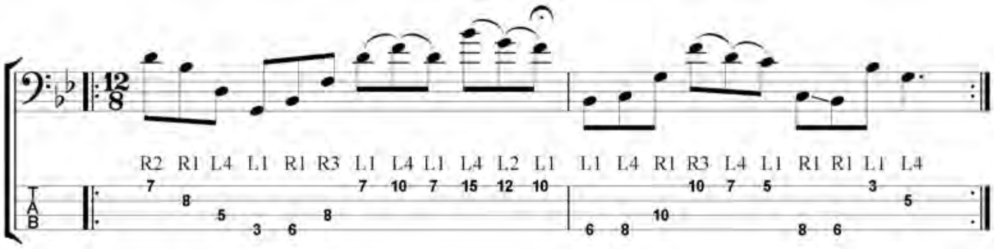
Exercise 1

Exercise 1 demonstrates this. Learn, practise and memories these structures:



Example 2

Using 12/8 as the time signature, **Exercise 2** endorses the following fingering: L (Left Hand), R (Right Hand), 1 (Index Finger), 2 (Middle Finger), 3 (Ring Finger) and 4 (Little Finger).

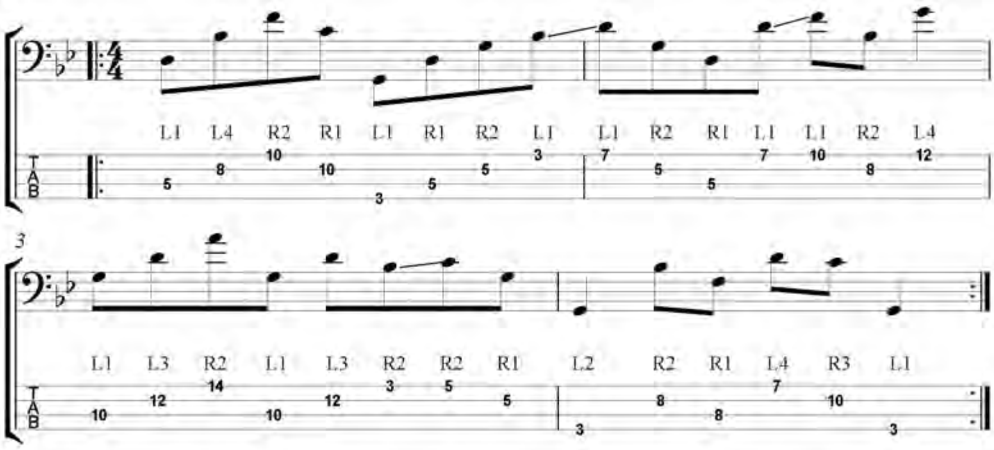


"LOTS OF THINGS COME IN PAIRS... 'MAJOR AND MINOR' ARE NO DIFFERENT. THERE'S A RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE PAIR THAT LINKS ALL OF THEIR DIATONIC INFORMATION"

Extending your tone life

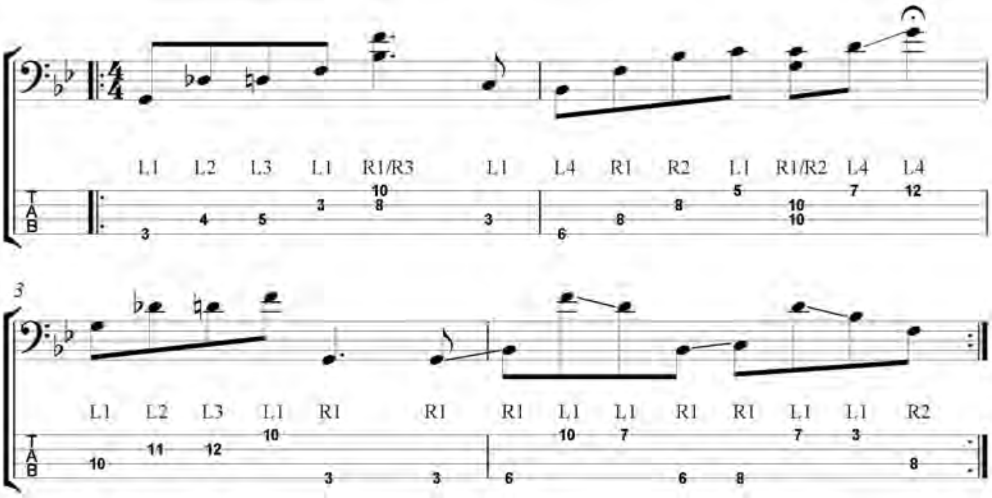
Example 3

The crossing nature of our hands is apparent at the beginning of the second bar in **Exercise 3**. Although they commence in the second and third positions of the minor pentatonic, our hands then seem to be chasing each other up the fretboard as they head towards the octave. Once in the upper register, a GMaj9 chord is then suggested before the right hand crosses back across the left to play the lower motif.



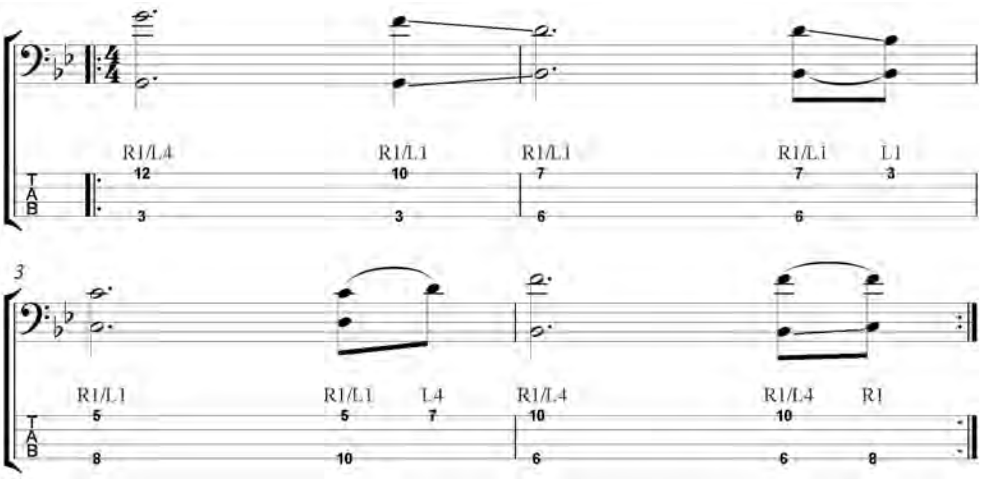
Example 4

Because of the anhemitonic nature of the pentatonic, the notes have always been an easily accessible vocabulary on bass and guitar. Thus their diatonic content is suitable for composing tapping ideas and can also be excessively used for soloing and improvisation. However, it can be possible for the scales to sometimes sound a little bland. **Exercise 4** introduces a blues note to our vocabulary in an effort to try and resolve this apparent situation. The flattened fifth's presence will create a degree of tension between the 4th and 5th intervals of the pentatonic platform that we've been using. This exercise can be a little tricky, as in the final two bars you'll have to move left and right hands adjacent to one another, but in opposite directions.



Example 5

Continuing with **Exercise 4**'s content (and perhaps a little influence from 'Walk On The Wild Side'), have a look at **Exercise 5**, our final workout for this month. The peculiar element in these remaining bars is that in order for you to perform the piece correctly and as intended, you'll need to keep both hands inverted from one other at all times. This will allow them not to become entangled or interfere with each another as they perform sliding double stops. Until next time, practise hard!



DAVID ETHERIDGE

DAVID ETHERIDGE ADDS SUBSTITUTIONS TO A 12-BAR PROGRESSION. MEET THE NEW CHORDS, DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD CHORDS...

This time around we're going to completely overhaul the 12-bar progression. **Example 1** shows the type of approach where you modulate all over the place, and it's satisfying both to play and to listen to. If you take solos on a 12 bar, it can be terrific fun to use this progression instead of stock chords on your solo, reverting back to more familiar fare for the band choruses. A friend told me some years ago that the first four-bar chord sequence is called 'the Swedish progression' – in which case, Swedish jazzers really know their stuff.

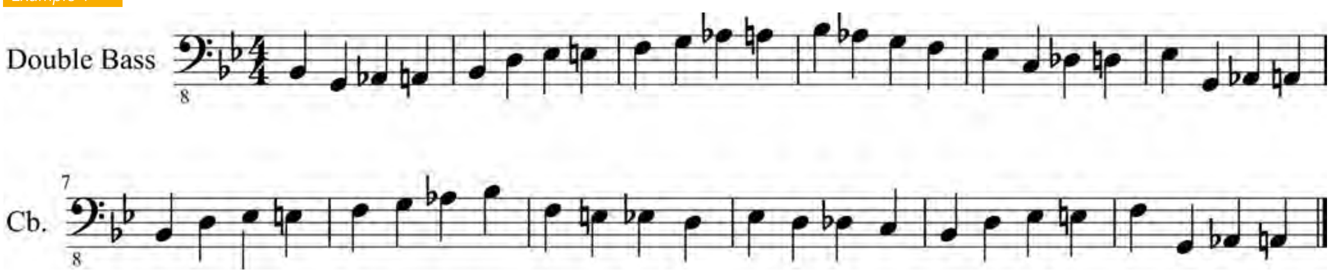
So what's going on in **Example 1**? Bar one is our home chord of Bb, but in bar two we're off and running, with a II-V-1 movement to Gm in bar three. However, the chords for bar two are Amb5 (the Eb providing the b5) to D7. In bar three the progression is Gm(7) to Gb7, stepping down chromatically to the Fm7 in bar 4. The Bb7 at the end of bar four has a b5 (E natural) to bar five's Eb7 chord, which bar six is now Ab7. In fact you could substitute the notes in bar five to Eb-Db-C-Bb to give a similar line to the Ab7 scale in bar six, if you so wished. Bar 7 takes a jump to Dm7, and the next few bars provides another III-VI-II-V movement (Dm7-Gm7-Cm7 -F7). However, the two-bar turnaround at the end is new: Dm-C#dim-Cm7-F7.

Let's try another approach, this time using diminished chords. The guy who started me off in jazz many years ago, Django-style guitarist Diz Disley, had a mischievous theory that you could play over any chord sequence with lots of diminished chords on the basis that some of the notes will be right all, or most of the time. I've tried it, and it almost works.

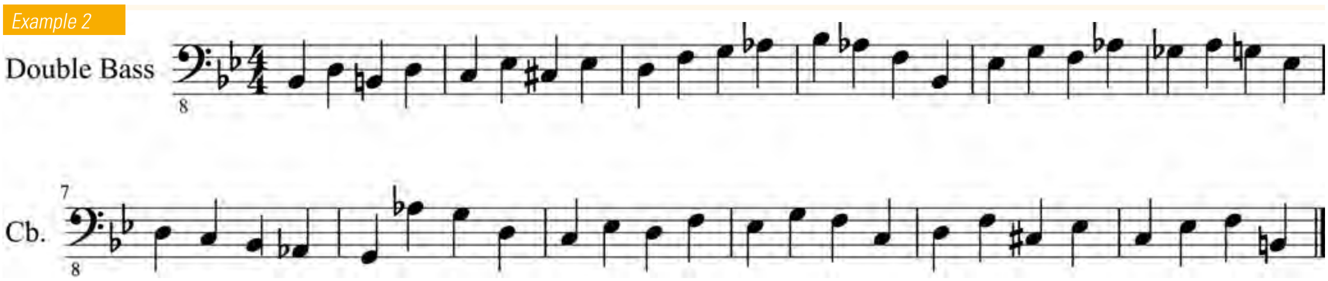
Example 2 shows the diminished progression approach. In bar one, the progression is Bb to Bdim, bar two Cm7 to C#dim, bar three Dm7b5 with the G as a passing tone, leading to Bb7 in bar four. You could make the last note an E natural for the semitone approach to Eb in the next bar if you wished. Bar five shows exactly the same approach, based on Eb: Eb-Fm7, Gb/F#dim-Eb7. In bars seven and eight we're using different chord tones: Dm7b5, and G7b9, while bar nine shows a Cm7-Dm7 movement, bar 10 Eb7-F7, and the last two bars Dm7-C#dim-Cm7-F7 with the b5 at the end.

Example 3 shows how to make an interesting progression just under the three chords of Bb7, Eb7 and F7. Notice here we're using a lot of semitone movement and passing tones. Don't worry, they'll

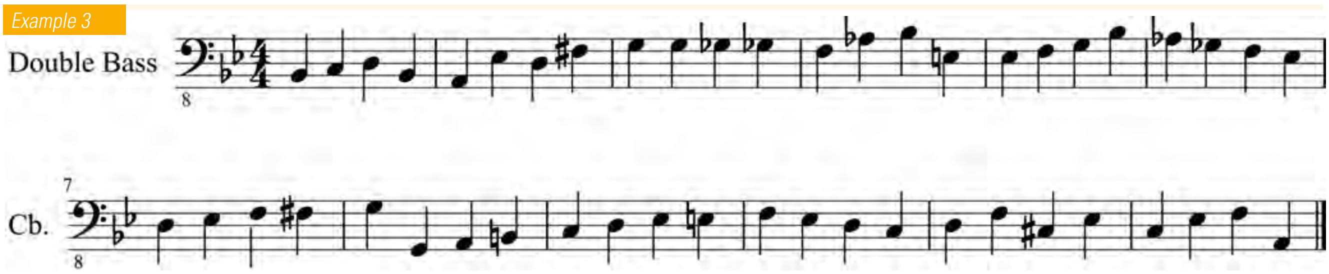
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



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The first bar pattern is one you'll have heard from the likes of Larry Graham and Chris Squire

"YOU COULD MAKE THE LAST NOTE AN E NATURAL FOR THE SEMITONE APPROACH TO Eb IN THE NEXT BAR IF YOU WISHED"

still sound great underneath the three basic chords. The first bar pattern is one you'll have heard many times from the likes of both Larry Graham and Chris Squire, but here it provides driving swing in a jazz perspective rather than funk or prog. Needless to say, I'm a fan of all three approaches.

Bars two and three show the kind of thing many players try playing under a basic 7th chord once they've discovered the dreaded blues scale; it has its place, but I find it can be overused if you use the same pattern under different chords. It's shown again in bars seven and eight. Bars nine and 10 show simple semitone movement, and you could always change them to F, Eb, D and C, and Eb, Db, C and Bb if you wished. The point here is to show an almost minimalist approach to the part without large leaps in pitch or extended arpeggios. Mix up all the approaches I've shown here and in past instalments, and the sky realy is the limit!

All this analysis might seem terribly foreboding, but my purpose here is to show you the possibilities in transforming a standard 12-bar progression beyond all recognition. More importantly, a lot of jazz players will read a part from a top line with chord symbols: there will be no bass part actually written out. So a chart that appears to be full of extended chords may be just a development of the good ol' 12 bar after all.

MIKE BROOKS

THIS MONTH MIKE ADVISES BASSISTS ON EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE PROCESS... AUDITIONING!

Welcome back! Auditioning can be nerve-wracking and involve a substantial amount of preparation time, yet the actual audition can be incredibly short and the rewards fantastic. Some of the points I make below may seem obvious, but due to the frenzy that some players go through while preparing for an audition, let alone doing it, hopefully some of these subjects will help you.

How to prepare? When auditioning for a covers band, it's quite likely that you'll know some of their songs – or if you don't, you will have heard them before and be familiar with them. However, not every band plays a song the same way as the original: they may play the song in a different style, segue it into another song or even incorporate it into a medley. Ask for a studio, rehearsal or live recording, listen to the material as much as you can and learn it inside out. Don't give yourself excuses if you fail to land the position.

Some players think they can busk their way through an audition – they're only fooling themselves. The band will be looking for the best candidate for the role, so being prepared and knowing the songs back to front is essential. Being able to sing backing vocals, which often requires the ability to harmonise, will put you in a better position than players who can't. Memorise your parts: don't rely on writing the part out because unless the band all read their parts, it won't add to the presentation.

Make sure your bass is in good condition and set up well: the high action you needed for a soul band the night before the audition might not work for you if you have to play something fast or percussive. The condition and type of your strings is worth considering: a fresh set of steel roundwounds might not supply the sort of sound that a Motown covers band needs, so a set of played-in strings or some half- or flatwounds might be the ticket. If your strings are old and struggling to stay in tune, either change them or give them a clean by boiling them or using string wipes. Consider taking a second bass with you, and if you're providing your own amplification, make sure it works without any problems. Ensure all your leads are in good working order and take a tuner with batteries or an adapter. On the subject of batteries, if you're using an active bass, replace the circuit batteries if they're old. Find out if the band use concert tuning or an alternate tuning beforehand, and ask if you need to bring a four-, five- or six-string bass, as well as fretted or fretless.

Even if you prepare solidly, you might still not get the position you're after – but don't let your playing be the reason they didn't choose you. Control the areas you can control and do something about it. Take earplugs if you need them, although playing without them might be advisable given the band may be shouting pointers to you during the songs. Relax beforehand, warm up your hands and arms – don't let tension affect your playing. Be prepared.

Extending your tone life

STEVE LAWSON

STEVE LOOKS AT THE PROS AND CONS OF MULTI-EFFECTS GEAR. WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

I want to take a little detour from our journey through different effect types to have a chat about choosing between multi-effects units and individual pedals.

My own journey into effects started with a handful of borrowed pedals in the 1980s: getting kicked out of my first band after breaking my arm was a great chance to plug in a distortion pedal and start doing solo versions of Pixies and Jesus & Mary Chain songs. I messed around with a chorus, but didn't actually own anything of my own until I bought a Korg multi-effects board when I left college and started touring. The quality of the individual effects wasn't great, but as I hadn't really tried many pedals out, I didn't have much to compare it to, and the huge advantage was being able to save presets per song. Program a sound and recall it at the push of a button. I could have different types of chorus for each song if I wanted, or different delay times programmed in.

Thus I was immediately seduced by the versatility and portability of multi-effects units. From the start of my professional career, I was flying to gigs a lot, and often playing without much setup time. Being able to put a multi-effects board on the floor with sounds all ready to go – and later on a rack unit that would sit on top of whatever rented amp was there, and send a controlled signal to the PA, was a huge advantage.

As time went on, my ear became more refined, and the opportunity arose to try out more equipment. The appeal of certain specific sounds became clear – a Carl Martin compressor, an EBS Chorus and so on – sounds that were distinct from what was possible in even the best rack gear. These were not so much better or worse, just different, and right for a particular application. I ended up in rigorous debates with friends who were pedal devotees, who saw rack effects as the ultimate compromise, or as an insult to their tone – largely, it must be said, on the strength of the ubiquitous presets that come with pretty much every rack unit ever built.

The quest for the perfect overdrive, or for the ideal selection of chorus pedals, to cover all eventualities: that appeals to both the sonic purist and the collector/trainspotter side of so many bass junkies. My own need for portability kept my latent pedal-lust on the back burner. I didn't want to be touring with a sub-standard sound, so the idea of having a home setup and a touring setup wasn't appealing. I invested in the best imaginable rack gear, helped develop the Looperlative (more of which in a later column), and took great advantage of the programmability to squeeze a huge range of sounds from my basses.

In recent years, the lure of tonal nirvana in this blossoming brave new world of pedals has proven too much, and I now carry both: my rack case, loaded with Lexicon, Looperlative, Kaoss Pad and MOTU sound-card, and my pedalboard, with a rotating cast of boxes cherry-picked for just the right sound in the right place. It's the best of both worlds. Flying to gigs gets trickier, but I've never been happier with my sound.

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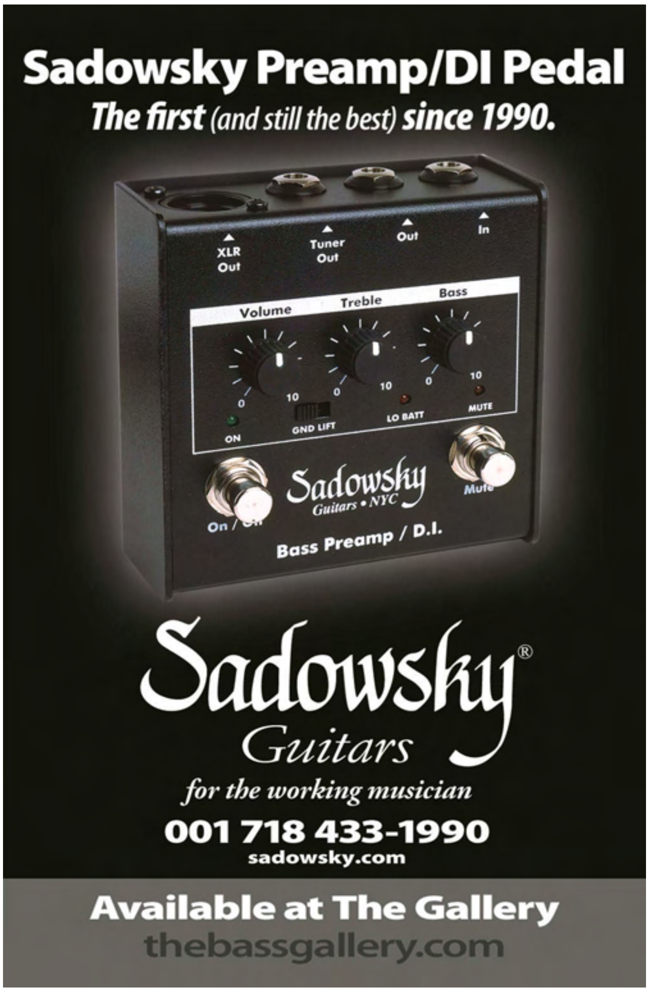

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TONE YOU WANT.
FLEXIBILITY YOU NEED.

NEW!

BA SERIES

CLASSIC TONE

- Legacy Ampeg preamp and tone stack circuits
- Custom high-output speaker design
- Ampeg Ultra Hi / Lo tone shaping*
- Bass Scrambler™ overdrive delivers SVT grind*

MODERN FLEXIBILITY

- True 60° sound reinforcement monitor angle
- Aux in / headphone outs

RUGGED PORTABILITY

- Protective all-steel amp chassis
- Impact-resistant metal corners
- Rugged, braced enclosures

You want the classic tone and rugged portability the BA Series is known for. You need modern features and flexibility that will work no matter what size stage you're playing on. The completely redesigned Ampeg BA Series Bass Combos have it all. Featuring classic Ampeg preamps and tone stacks, you've got a huge variety of tones at your disposal, including the tube-like grind of our all-new Bass Scrambler™ overdrive. The rugged, portable designs even feature a true monitor angle, giving you added clarity for both practice and live performance. Classic Ampeg tone in modern, portable combos – BA Series.

You Tube

*Some features available on select models only

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